Justice Committee

Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from Anonymous 33

1. Do you agree with the proposal in the Bill to repeal the 2012 Act? What are your reasons for coming to this view?

Yes I agree as this is attack on myself and fellow football fans.

This act makes me feel very uncomfortable at the football and ruins my game day experience. Having a camera rammed in my face for a full 90 mins / longer is not my idea of a good day out at the football.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

No.

3. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute offensive behaviour related to football which leads to public disorder? If so, could you specify the criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 1 risk creating a gap in the criminal law?

Yes I think there is perfectly fine laws already in place that are acceptable and fair for any criminal act at a football ground. Laws such as Common Law Breach of the Peace, Section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003, section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.

There was no need for this act to be brought into place as most football fans who attend game are well behaved.

4. Do you have a view on the focus of section 1 of the 2012 Act, which criminalises behaviour surrounding watching, attending or travelling to or from football matches, which may not be criminalised in other settings?

I don’t think there is any need to treat a football fan differently to say rugby, ice hockey, music fans etc we are all the same and all attended events to enjoy ourselves with family and friends. You’re scared to open your mouth at a game in case the police wrongfully target you.

5. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute threats made with the intent of causing a person or persons fear or alarm or inciting religious hatred? If so, could you specify the criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 6 risk creating a gap in the criminal law?

Other laws like section 6 have hardly been used there is no need at all to create another Act for this behaviour when there is already a law in place. No one should be
charged under a different law just because they attend a football game and not another sporting event game.

6. Do you have a view on the proposed transitional arrangements in the Bill: that there should be no further convictions for section 1 and 6 offences from the date on which the repeal of those offences takes effect; and that the police will cease issuing fixed penalty notices at least from the point at which the Bill is passed?

The Act needs to and should cease with immediate effect. I think all pending cases should be dropped and any previous cases should have the charges taking from their record.

A law that only criminalises football fans like myself should have never been put into effect in this day and age. To put people through the courts, put families through so much pain and stress, put people at serious potential to lose their job, all because they attend a football game is nothing short of disgraceful.

7. To what extent do you consider that the 2012 Act has assisted in tackling sectarianism?

I don’t think this has done anything to tackle sectarianism. There has been no convictions at all of this charge that tackle sectarianism.

To tackle sectarianism we need to educate people not drag them through absolute hell which can ruin someone’s life.

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