Justice Committee

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

Written submission from Anonymous 52

Repealing this bill is something I feel must absolutely be done. This act has been a disgrace ever since it was introduced back in 2012. This act has ruined many lives in such a short time through absolutely ridiculous charges, with a vast amount being thrown out. Close friends of my own have been dragged through what I and those can only describe as being hell, with 6am chaps on their door, showing up to places of work, being strip searched upon arrival to police stations, spending hours in a cell. This has extreme implications on those who have been affected by this oppressive act, whether this be with family relations and/or work. I myself feel less comfortable when attending the football due to being constantly filmed by police yards away shoving a handheld device in your face and that something I have says or done may be deemed offensive by someone who is “qualified” to do so. I fear my door being chapped early in the morning, I fear my work being involved, my sense of trust within the police force is at an absolute low since the introduction of the act.

The original legislation is something I entirely did not support.

I believe that the laws in place where already sufficient with tackling offensive behaviour at football. There are the likes of; breach of peace section 74 of the criminal justice (Scotland) act 2003, section 38 of the criminal justice and licensing(Scotland) act 2010. I fully believe that acts already in place prior to the OBFA act where competent in dealing with cases of offensive behaviour which happened at a football match.

I think having a law directed at football fans and football fans only is nothing short of discrimination. It is an absolute absurd idea to attack fans based on their choice of sport they chose to follow, there are many cases of threatening, sectarian and offensive behaviour out with football.

This act should be repealed with effect of immediate. I believe it is absolutely ridiculous that we are even having to come to this, any cases that are pending should be dropped as soon as the repeal is brought into action. I also support any previous convictions brought by this act to be quashed. An act brought out with the sole intention of going after football fans only should never have even been thought of.

I believe that this act has had absolutely no positive impact on tackling sectarianism since 2012. This is still an issue we face today and unfortunately no further act being brought into place may ever change this, but maybe looking down the route of education could have been thought of instead.

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