Justice Committee

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

Written submission from Peter Trace

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

No. Scotland has a long history of sectarianism and the current laws do not go far enough to fight this in our society. The fact that we allow Orange marches on our street or Marches by Catholic organisations is proof positive that the government does not take sectarianism seriously.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

Yes

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?

No, the current laws around sectarian acts are totally inadequate.

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 do not

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?

No, I grew up in Scotland and faced almost daily hatred towards me from the other side of the Sectarian divide. Sectarianism is NOT taken seriously by the powers that run our country

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?

No, if the threshold for evidence under the act was sufficient then the prosecutions should continue. The perpetrators should not get away Scot-free.
7. To what extent do you consider that the 2012 Act has assisted in tackling sectarianism?

It has had a limited effect, mainly because it didn’t go far enough. Sectarianism is still a massive problem in Scottish society and no-one is prepared to tackle it as they are scared to take away the so called “rights” of those who continue to promote these activities. The Orange Lodge, Cairdhe na hEireann and the west of Scotland Band Alliance should all be banned institutions in Scotland as their only reason to exist is to continue to promote the massive divide in Scottish Society. We have moved on as a Nation, but the dinosaurs in these organisations want to take us back to the 17th Century. It is time for this country to grow up! The Members of the Scottish Parliament are ALL responsible for every single act of sectarianism in this country as they, as one, have done NOTHING to rid us of this blight on our society.

Peter Trace
30 July 2017