Justice Committee
Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill
Written submission from Gillian Sloan

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No the 2012 Act should not be repealed. There is too much sectarian behaviour / violence within Scotland as it is and everything should be done to counteract this. Even if the leader of the Scottish Tories appears to be encouraging more sectarian behaviour.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

Yes, however the police should be prepared to apply it more regularly. Especially as there seems to be an attitude towards encouraging sectarian behaviour outside football, football must take the lead on stamping out this behaviour.

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?

While there are other provisions to prosecute offensive behaviour, they also do not appear to be applied so it is important that football has its own particular legislation. As football has many supporters, if they (and the police) enforce the 2012 Act, it should help to stamp it out.

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?

In the past there has been a lot of violence by football supporters before and after matches, therefore it is the police & the stewards job to ensure the safety of the general public as they go about their normal business. Bad behaviour should not be tolerated in any form, especially when it involves football.

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

While the 2012 Act is not perfect, to repeal it would send the message that sectarian behaviour is acceptable, at the moment it does appear to have significantly reduced this behaviour.

To be honest, trying to repeal this Act should more like the person is happy with sectarian behaviour and just wants to try to score political points.

Gillian Sloan
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