Justice Committee

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

Written submission from Jon Campbell

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

It is ridiculous that a law exists targeting one group. The law was brought in after a Celtic–Rangers match which was remembered for the behaviour of one set of players, nothing to do with the fans. A police officer, or even member of the public, can now decide on what they are offended by. It is a ridiculous law introduced by a ridiculous political party who think they can do what they want. They can’t. This bill has to go.

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?

The law already covered offensive behaviour. This disgusting bill allows anybody to claim to be offended even if they are nowhere near a so-called offending incident.

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?

Behaviour such as waving flags and singing political / folk songs. I’m fed up of going to the football and being filmed by police on a power trip desperate to find cause to arrest people.

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?

If songs of an offensive nature, such as sectarian or racist, are sung, the law already allowed for prosecution.

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 bill and anything relating to it has to go. There should not be any transitional arrangements. Just get rid of it.

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

Absolutely none. If anything, it has increased the issues.

Jon Campbell
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