Justice Committee

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

Written submission from Craig William Russell

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. It’s unfair to segregate society. It’s not fair and biased towards some fans.

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. Existing law has the power to combat any offence at football but be fair to society as a whole eg. Breach of the peace or drunk and disorderly.

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?

To criminalise only football fans for acts that other members of society carry out day in and out without any criminal proceedings being brought against them.

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?

Yes. There are already laws in place.

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?

With immediate effect.

7. To what extent do you consider that the 2012 Act has assisted in tackling sectarianism?
Absolutely none. Check out Ibrox every week.

Craig William Russell
15 August 2017