I would be grateful if you would please scrap the OBFA for the following reasons.

Serves no purpose - we already have several laws in place to deal with violence and discrimination of any sort. There is no legal definition of “sectarian” and anti-sectarian organisations have basically said it is stupid and unhelpful. This law is focussed on “FOOTBALL” and “OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR”, the former seems rather snobbish and discriminatory i.e. there is no need to keep an eye on loutish, generally middle class rugby fans on a night out but every need to keep an eye on loutish generally working class football fans.

The latter is so vague, you could technically arrest the entire Tartan army for signing Flower of Scotland during a match against England (a song that glorifies Scotland’s past battles, killing and fighting against English oppression). I see no difference in singing about Bobby Sands or William Wallace as both were seen as terrorists or freedom fighters depending on your view point. I do see a difference in singing about sending people home because “the famine is over” or “being up to our knees in fenian blood”. These are not just about history or nationality but about encouraging hate of a particular religion.

The latter are sang only by Rangers fans yet in a predominantly Protestant country with a predominantly Protestant police force, it is mostly Celtic fans who are apparently doing most of the “offensive behaviour”. Who is offended and why are the pertinent questions?

This law pretends to be liberal and progressive but it is anything but. It is snobbish, vague and left in the hands of a police force and legal system who are incapable of using it consistently to create any positive impact on society. This is anecdotal but when I was a kid I seem to remember a lot more bitterness, discrimination and violence, where football was just another extended expression of those things. Just before the sledge hammer of the Act came along, there was a lot less of such things.

So there really was no need for the Act. I feel all it has done is encourage a lot of people, who would otherwise not bother singing rebel songs to take note of the fact that they are being told they are criminals if they dare sing songs about their past (in case it offends someone).

It is complete utter nonsense and the person who thought it was a great idea really needs to take a nice hot bath and say you know what that was a bit of daft overreaction. I think the SNP have sat in their ivory tower for too long. No other party supports this law and it is major reason many people did not vote SNP recently. The people have spoken, the football clubs have spoken, anti-sectarian organisations have spoken and all say the same thing… scrap it and do it immediately.
I urge you please to do the right thing.

Paul Morgan
10 August 2017