Justice Committee

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

Written submission from Dean Armour

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 I fully support the bill to repeal the Act, the Act was rushed through and has caused chaos since it was introduced.

2. Did you support the original act?

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 I would say so, current laws which are already in place such as breach of the peace, I feel laws like that would be more than sufficient in replacing the broken Act.

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 personally believe there shouldn't be laws that target only one part of society, football fans have been discriminated against since this law was forced through and that should not have been allowed to happen.

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?

As far as I’m aware this part of the act has rarely been used and prosecutors actually have been using previous law instead.

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?
I feel that the Act should be scrapped with immediate effect and any ongoing cases should be scrapped. I also think convictions under the law should be removed as it shouldn't have been implemented in the first case.

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

I believe the act has not helped at all, I'm actually of the other belief that the act has made the problem worse than it already was, previous laws already covered sectarianism so there was and isn't any need for it at all.

Dean Armour
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