

# Petitioner submission of 13 September 2023

## PE1975: Reform the law relating to Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs)

This update provides additional comment to that previously submitted.

Since the last consideration by the committee, further activity has or is shortly to take place indicating increasing engagement on the call for Scottish Anti SLAPP legislation by an increasing range of credible bodies. This activity included/s the following:

1. The University of Aberdeen's Anti-SLAPP Research Hub within the School of Law ran a full day workshop in June 2023 on the theme "Developing a Model Anti-SLAPP Law for Scotland". The petitioner was an invited participant, with other participants including stakeholders from civil society, academia, Journalism, politics and the legal profession. It included participants from elsewhere in the UK and Europe. Key points included:
  - a. All agreed on the need for action in line with the petition.
  - b. The workshop considered a wide range of issues ranging from the "chilling effect" of SLAPPs to their threat to human rights requirements.
  - c. There was considerable goodwill towards assisting in the drafting of legislation and a commitment to development of a model law.
2. On September 19 2023, the petitioner will be a speaker at a Transparency Task Force (TTF) workshop on SLAPPs and why they are the "enemy of truth and transparency". Amongst other roles, TTF is the secretariat to the APPG on Personal Banking and Fairer Financial Services in the Westminster parliament.
3. On November 27-28 2023 in London, the petitioner will be a keynote speaker on the UK Anti-SLAPP Conference being held to address "Tackling Implementation of SLAPP Solutions". The conference is jointly organised by The Foreign Policy Centre, the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and the Justice for Journalists Foundation. The petitioner has been invited as a keynote speaker

on the opening day of the conference to address delegates on “Progress towards Anti-SLAPP legislation in Scotland”.

The above are indicative of growing interest in the current vulnerability of Scotland to SLAPPs. In addition to such formal events, the petitioner continues to engage with academics, journalists and others.

My appeal to the committee is to hold an oral evidence session and allow deeper discussion of the serious issues involved.