



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Christina McKelvie MSP
Convener

The Rt. Hon. The Lord Carloway PC
Lord President of the Court of Session

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Via email only

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Dear Lord Carloway

Prisoner voting in Scotland

I am writing to you on behalf of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee of the Scottish Parliament in your capacity as head of the Scottish judiciary. On Thursday 7 September 2017 the Committee held a public evidence session on the issue of the blanket ban on prisoner voting in Scotland. This session was undertaken at the request of Patrick Harvie MSP, in light of both EU and UK court rulings on the issue of prisoner voting.

During the oral evidence session, views were expressed by some witnesses in terms of a potential role for the Scottish judiciary in terms of sentencing policy, and whether decisions regarding a prisoner's right to vote may be left to judges to decide on a case by case basis. The Official Report transcript of the session is available to read.¹ The written evidence the Committee received is also available to read.²

¹ Equalities and Human Rights Committee, Official Report of the 19th Meeting 2017: Thursday 7 September 2017: <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11067&mode=pdf>

² Written evidence on prisoner voting: http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Equal_Opps/Meeting%20Papers/EHRiC_public_papers_20170907.pdf and additional paper on prisoner voting: http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Equal_Opps/Meeting%20Papers/Submission_from_the_Howard_League_20170907.pdf

Request for views

In light of this discussion, the Committee wished to provide the judiciary with the opportunity to submit any views you may have, in writing, on this issue. We would request that any such submission be with us by **Monday 16 October 2017**.

Next steps

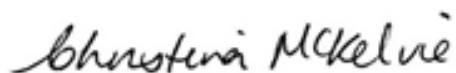
You'll note from the Minutes of the Meeting of 7 September that the Committee undertook to write to others stakeholders seeking their views.³ As soon as we have received all of these views the Committee will consider the responses and decide what further action we should take, or, whether we should make recommendations to the Scottish Government in terms of how to address the issue of prisoner voting in Scotland.

Contact

If you have any questions about this request, or the work of the Committee, please contact the Committee Clerks, in the first instance, at the contact details below.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Christina McKelvie MSP
Convener
Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Contact

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³ Minutes of the Meeting of 7 September 2017 (Item 4):
http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Equal_Opps/Minutes/Minutes_20170907.pdf