



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Justice Committee

Stewart Regan
Chief Executive
Scottish Football Association
(SFA)

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3 November 2017

Dear Mr Regan,

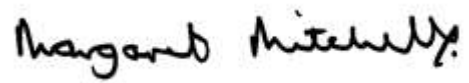
Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

As you are aware, the Justice Committee is currently undertaking scrutiny of the Offensive Behaviour and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill. At a recent meeting, the Committee agreed to take oral evidence from the Scottish Football Association on 14 November. I understand that the invite was initially declined on the basis that your preferred witnesses were unavailable and, after further correspondence, you offered to provide written evidence in lieu of oral evidence or to attend on another date.

I appreciate the invite was initially sent just under three weeks before this evidence session, and that you have offered to provide written evidence or attend on another date. However, the Justice Committee's work programme is incredibly busy, and the timetable for consideration of this Bill offers no leeway for an evidence session on another date.

I am disappointed that a key stakeholder such as the SFA is not able to appear before the Committee to provide Committee members with the opportunity to question you on an issue as central to its work as offensive behaviour at football matches. As you will no doubt recall, the SFA gave oral evidence on the original Bill in 2011, and having spoken to colleagues from every party represented on the Committee, I know that we all share the same view that it is vital to hear in person from the SFA again to ensure that the Committee has the fullest possible understanding of the issues attached to the Bill.

Should you still believe you are not able to give oral evidence, the Committee will consider other steps it can take.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end of the name.

Margaret Mitchell MSP
Convener, Justice Committee