LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM BRIAN CRAM

I would like to ask that you reconsider the proposal to remove the rates relief that is currently applied to independent sector schools. I think you have lost sight of the benefits of having an independent sector and seem to think that a totalitarian system where everyone is given the same education is what is required to create a vibrant and healthy society. Our country needs a diversity of opinion and views and this attack on the independent sector of education is very flawed. In the case of Dundee High School the sum raised will be in the order of £250k. You will know that the costs for the state sector of educating a child for a year is in the region of £8k. There are over 1000 pupils attending DHS and the school will survive this mean minded politically inspired attack. The people who will pay for your misguided approach to the independent sector will be those who will not be able to receive the bursaries that are currently available. There will not be any benefit to the state sector at all. As you can see from the figures only 32 pupils need to transfer from DHS to the state sector to completely negate the "saving" that will be made by removing the rates relief that has been applied because of the charitable nature of the origins of DHS.

As an individual I attended Dundee High School which was in those days a Direct Grant school, when this status was removed and Assisted Places were introduced the school accepted the change and when the Assisted Places scheme was removed the school trustees of the time, and I was one of them, opted to become an independent school. Throughout the whole period the aim of the school has been to provide education to a very high standard in a way that was appropriate for the ability of the pupil.

I am saddened by this mean spirited attack on an organisation that works tirelessly for the benefit of the community by providing sports and cultural facilities and I would implore you reject section 10 of the Barclay Review and confirm that rate relief for the independent schools sector will be retained.