LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

As someone who was educated through the state school system, someone who has extensive links to the state system through relatives that are teachers, someone who is linked through local authority representation and as someone who through their job speaks to parents who educate their children through both the state and private systems, I believe that I am in a position to provide a balanced argument.

I think it is clear to see that state education is failing and whilst the SNP government like to put the blame firmly at Westminster I think the failing is far closer to home. No one should have to choose to put their child to Private School but the sad state of affairs is that the current education system is failing our children and something needs to be done about it. Penalising private education facilities is not the way to do that – in fact by penalising these facilities the government will in actual fact be creating a bigger long term issue that will take years to resolve and this issue is the creation of talented individuals who will be the driving force of our economy in the future.

You may ask what the issues are that I have experienced first-hand and in order to give you an indication of what these are I have highlighted briefly below:

1. Children who are supposedly top of their class in different subjects but when assessed in more detail actually couldn’t spell – these children were 10 and 11 years old. Is this an acceptable standard?
2. Children having 10 to 12 different teachers throughout the year as there wasn’t enough staff to cover. From a personal experience I witnessed this as a child at school where I didn’t have an English Teacher for a whole year and as such was forced to seek additional help through a private tutor otherwise as a dyslexic child would have failed my exam and never managed to get to university. I now employ 3 staff members and run a successful business but this was put at risk by the state of the current education system.
3. Children taking pictures on their phones so that they can do their homework – is this acceptable? I don’t think it is as I would not be encouraging my child to take a phone to school as I view this a bully’s dream.
4. No supply of writing books and general utensils – I was appalled at what I heard children in Ayrshire, Borders and Dumfries and Galloway councils have to provide as the local authority no longer does.

These are only 4 issues that I view as issues that need addressed as some of these have been issues for over 30 years when I was a child. The fact that they are still an issue today asks the questions why but more importantly are the reason why I chose to send my daughter for private education. Because the state is failing our children
and will continue to fail our future children unless things change. So why should hard working class parents like myself be penalised for sending our daughter for an education that should be supplied from the state.

I would be delighted to send my daughter to the local primary school – it would save me a fortune, allow my mortgage to be paid off quicker, allow us to go on better family holidays, allow us to upgrade our car quicker, allow us to spend more in the economy but we chose to forego these in order to ensure that our daughter has an education that gives her a chance to compete with her peers from Asia, America and Europe. We live in a competitive world and it is only going to get more competitive as the developing world such as South American and African countries catch up. A solid world leading education system is the only way we can give our children a chance in this world moving forward.

The impact that the review of the local rates bill does not take this into consideration. If I decide to take my daughter out of private education and put her to her local school – where there isn’t enough room already I may add – the cost to the local authority is huge. They will need to spend more on larger school buildings, renovations, road infrastructure, and teachers etc. Can someone please tell me how this is going to be funded as the current PFI model is a one way ticket to financial ruin and is the biggest financial drain on our combined resources. As a UK taxpayer, corporation tax payer and council tax payer I would question if the added cost of this financial incompetence has been added in to overall cost that is actually required to fund a state child place has actually been calculated.

As I said above, I would love to have the equivalent of a PPI windfall every year and not send my child to a private school and use my funds to boost the economy in other ways but I don’t see that as an option as I would be failing my daughter in my attempt to provide her with the best opportunity to compete in this world. Sort out the state school sector first and get us back to the world leading levels of education we had previously through building schools in a more cost effective way which in turn will mean more funding for school teachers, equipment, facilities etc. which will then mean that we won’t be having these issues.

Every MP, MSP, MEP and locally elected councillor is accountable for the state of our education system and over the past 30 years every single one of them has failed in their duty.