LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

I am disappointed to learn that independent schools may shortly lose non-domestic rates relief. I consider that independent schools should as a matter of public interest continue to receive relief from non-domestic rates. My concern is that the introduction of these will impact on both the children who attend independent schools and those who attend state schools and also the wider community.

Our children attend a private school in Edinburgh and the decision to send them there was not taken lightly – instead we were incredibly disappointed when our local state school offered us a place for our first child in a class of 42 with 2 teachers! We visited the school twice to try and get our head around whether it was possible but on each visit we were taken aback by the huge class numbers, the shift system in operation at lunchtime for the children to have lunch, the tiny playground which is so small the children have nowhere to move and the few facilities on offer to the children.

We consider that our decision and the decision taken by a number of parents in Scotland to enrol and pay for an independent education is crucial for the educational system in Scotland and also for the wider communities for the following reasons:-

(i) It removes a burden on the state system to educate a substantial number of children. If all the parents in our catchment area sent their children to our local state school the state would not have the room or the facilities to educate them in the school. How would the government resolve that? As it is our local school is at full capacity and there is no room for expansion.

(ii) The independent sector improves the pupil to teacher ratio in the State sector.

(iii) The facilities funded by parents in the independent sector are made available to the local community – our private school does a lot for the wider community including offering facilities to the wider community, camps for children not at the school, wider community engagement such as beach cleans, visits to old persons residential care homes, fund raising for a number of charities and funded places for children from poorer backgrounds to attend the school to name a few. If the relief is withdrawn then a number of parents will have to remove their children which will reduce the funding available for all of these initiatives.

(iv) Although the state schools do not benefit from the relief they are not directly impacted by the rates which are applied – however independent schools will be.
These are to name just a few considerations. The removal of the rates relief will likely mean that each of the above will be affected, substantially, and the likelihood is that a number of schools will have to close meaning that all of the benefits mentioned above will cease to be available in some local communities.