LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES (SCOTLAND) BILL
SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you as a very concerned parent filled with unbearable anxiety caused by the suggested proposals to remove the charitable status of private schools.

I understand there is a perception that all children who attend private school come from wealthy families who can pay school fees with their spare change. Whilst it is true, that a portion of families who send their children to private school would not be phased by the impact of fee rises – there is also a large portion of families like myself who have made a conscious decision to sacrifice and invest everything into their children’s education to give them the best start in life that parents from working class families like mine didn’t have.

By sacrifice I mean, we decided to put all our money towards our children’s education as opposed to us buying a house, going of holidays, even general entertainment – in fact, we have cancelled our TV licence, buy our clothes from charity shops and car boots sales – on occasion, going hungry at work when we forgot our lunch at home and couldn’t justify the expense when we needed to save for our children’s fees.

You may be wondering why we would want to endure the above when we could quite easily send our children to state school.

Unfortunately, we are the squeezed middle and can only afford housing in one of the most deprived areas of Edinburgh to keep our costs down since we were priced out of private sector renting in the better areas, in doing so, we were stung by the Post Code lottery of schooling and our catchment primary and secondary schools are Craigroyston which appears at the bottom of the bottom of the league table. Our intention is to break the cycle of disabled opportunities and to give our children the chance of social mobility and better prospects for their future.

However, since my husband and I are both civil servants on modest wages, my entire salary is spend on fees as is a portion of my husbands who has to take care of the rest of the household bills. My husband has not had a pay rise in over 7 years due to a pay freeze since the recession and after the next couple of years, neither will I since we will both hit our pay ceilings.

Along with the actual fees, there are additional fees we must scramble to cover such as lunch, trips, uniforms, holiday and afterschool clubs. We are squeezed financially so much that a fee hike in response to higher costs the school will incur due to the loss of its charitable status would mean families such as myself will be priced out of giving our children the chance we did not have ourselves when we were children. It’ll also mean we must place more pressure on the state schools to find places for our children and therefore I think will cost the government more money than the savings it will recoup from the private schools paying higher rates.
We already incur yearly fee rises to inflation, but soon enough it'll all be too much for us to afford. Next year, we would have been eligible for some financial help from the bursary the school provides for families such as ours when our older son moves in P7 – this was something we were going to rely on heavily however, I can only imagine that once the school loses its charitable status it would no longer be able to support families like mine who need the help especially when the fees increase even more when the children move the senior school.

I plead with you not to take this action as it would lead to devastating effects if we have to pull our children out of the school because unfortunately we're not wealthy enough to afford it anymore. Especially on the children who are so embedding into the school and would have to lose their stability, their friends, their environment that they have grown up and developed in. Especially being from an ethnic minority group who has come from a legacy of disadvantage – I feel our aim to break that cycle is being ripped from us despite our valiant efforts to do well and better by our children. The very bursary we were just about to gain relief from so much that I felt Id be able to breathe easy and sleep more peacefully as it would have eased the financial pressure and anxiety I suffer from daily will be taken away before my children even had a chance. And I know for sure I am not the only parent in this predicament. Speaking to other parents - this is more common then you think.