LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

As a parent of three children who have and are being schooled in the private system in Edinburgh, I have been following the developments relating to rates relief for Independent Schools in Scotland.

The Office of the Scottish Charity has carried out a thorough and full review of Independent Schools. The review considered whether the existence of an independent school has a negative impact on state schools in the area and if it is divisive in society. The review found that there is not strong evidence to support the view that there is a negative impact. The review did not support the Government’s view. Furthermore the review found that many schools including the one my child attends, provides bursary support, sibling discounts and scholarships bring benefits to society.

The Government promotes a progressive society in which anyone can get on and improve the lives of themselves and their families. In a modern democracy we have many choices in the ways we can improve our lives and for me, I have taken the path of private education as my primary aspiration for my family. This has been at the sacrifice of many of the day to day purchases which countless people in Scotland see as part of their lives such as foreign holidays, new cars or meals out. By removing the rates relief, fees will increase, bursaries will be reduced which will result in private education being put out of the reach of aspirational families such as mine.

Currently, those attending private schools contribute to the state education system through taxes. The contribution by those parents not taking up the places for their children in the state system allows resources to be put to good use on fewer children than would be in the system if private schools did not exist or some children moved to the state system due to unaffordable fees.

Under the charitable status the Independent Sector contributes to the communities in which they work by opening up facilities to the community such as swimming pools, music days etc. All of these contributions will be under threat if the rates status is changed.

For these reasons, I urge the Government to continue to give rates relief to Independent Schools.