LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

I am writing in relation to the proposed removal of charitable rates relief for independent schools.

I strongly oppose this proposal. Having been educated in state schools myself, I recently moved my daughters from the state sector to an independent school in Edinburgh. I did so for the following reasons:

- the class sizes at my daughters’ previous school were enormous;
- the school kept taking students from out of the catchment area. Further classrooms were built in the playground. There was a tiny playground after this building work completed. There was no gym or sports facilities, with PE classes held in the lunch hall; and
- a number of children did not speak English as a first language. There was insufficient language support, making teaching of the classes difficult.

We reluctantly moved our children into the independent sector in 2018, making significant financial sacrifices to do so.

Edinburgh Council no longer needs to fund schooling my children and therefore benefits from the fact they are schooled in the independent sector. The fees are already increasing in 2019 as a result of the new pay deal for teachers and enhanced pension contributions.

The school provides significant bursary funding and allows use of its facilities by the community. The school is a non-profit making body and should continue to benefit from rates relief.

The proposed actions will result in further school closures in the independent sector and increased pressure on the state sector. They will also put many hard-working parents in financial difficulties and result in reduced bursaries.

The Scottish Government seems intent on dragging down the independent sector rather than trying to improve the state sector, including reducing class sizes, increasing numbers of teachers and investing in sports facilities.

The proposals are politically motivated and unfair.