LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

I serve in the armed forces and have been stationed overseas for 3 consecutive tours. We do not have access to senior schools that teach either the UK curriculum or specifically the Scottish one. As such, we have the necessity to send our children to UK boarding schools if we wish or have to stay overseas. We are neither “elitist” or “privileged” as indicated in the biased and targeted approach of the 2014 public petition. We serve the Crown wherever we are sent. Without affordable access to the boarding school sector, we could not educate our children. The grant we receive to help towards school fees is capped, so parents must fund the remaining costs themselves. For me, after a grant of around £7.5k per term, I still have to find some £2k to meet all costs per term. The removal of non-domestic rates relief will:

- Threaten small schools with closure (my daughter is in a school of just 300 pupils (in Scotland);
- Increase fees for parents like me, with no alternative but to board their children;
- I am one of many hard-working average people who try to do the best for their children. The Scottish independent schools are not elitist or privileged. They are high quality, caring, necessary establishments for many of us who need them;
- I do not want to educate my daughter in England, but the fee increase that follows any removal of rates relief would likely force me to move her to England where fees are affordable.

As an aside, the independent schools are being targeted unfairly. No other sector within the charities area has been put through this. It seems like some people in Scotland have it in for the schools, have a political beef with the independent sector. Scotland’s education is excellent, and its delivery of both public and private should be cherished, championed and encouraged. Please do not remove rate relief for a sector that works hard to benefit the public, employ locally so many of its support staff, and support parents like me (overseas and without alternatives).