LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

As a parent of 2 children at Cargilfield Preparatory School in Barnton, Edinburgh, who previously attended Roseburn Primary near Murrayfield, I am writing to express my sincere concern at this Bill's proposal to remove the charitable relief for rate from independent schools in Scotland.

From the supporting documents issued with the consultation, I note that the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator found no "strong evidence" to support the arguments of "disbenefit", that independent schools have a negative impact on state schools in the same area, and a divisive influence on society. On the contrary, Cargilfield holds a number of community events on its campus, recently the Cramond School sports day, also the oversubscribed Summer Camp, football holiday camps, musical events in and for the community.

As a school, OSCR noted that Cargilfield offers bursaries, scholarships, and sibling discounts to allow children whose parents might not otherwise be financially able to send their children to benefit from its education, particularly those with talent in music, art or sport.

Indirectly, the benefits to the community of the independent sector are making places at state schools available which would otherwise be taken by those attending them.

As well its high standard in a wide education, the school's timetable also offers round the clock care 8am-6pm, which allows working parents, with no other childcare available, like both of us, to do a full day's work, earning and so contributing to the tax system, as well as taking our children out of the education paid for by taxpayers, which was not possible for us when our children were at Roseburn.

We know well from our experience at Roseburn that the state education system in Edinburgh is under severe pressure, with over-full classrooms, and under-resourced staff & materials. We witnessed dedicated vocational teachers leaving not only the school, not only the state system but the profession completely.

Increasing rates paid by the independent sector will inevitably increase pressure on already oversubscribed places in the state system, by pushing parents unable to pay the increase out of the independent system and, at the same time, only make the independent sector more restricted to the very few, increasing the claimed elitism that those arguing for the rates increase wish to break down.
Please look more closely at the effects such a proposal would have practically and in reality, rather than only politically.