LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

As parents sending our children to an independent school we are concerned by the proposal to remove charitable relief from non domestic rates.

We have enjoyed the ability to choose a high quality education for our children which we did not believe was available to us via the state sector. The quality of the education our children enjoy is first class and the opportunities and facilities available to them are simply not available in the state sector. Given the significant cost of this type of education and our income level we have also qualified for bursary assistance.

Our concern is that the removal of rates relief will result in fewer bursary places for children from less affluent households which will in turn lead to families in circumstances similar to ours being unable to afford independent education. The population in the school our children attend is diverse and this will be at risk if fewer bursaries are available and those families such as ourselves are not able to afford full fees the school community will become increasingly elitist.

On a point of principle I object to charitable benefits being selectively applied to qualifying organisations - if independent schools qualify under OSCR rules they should enjoy the same benefits as other qualifying organisations. Independent schools also contribute and are involved with local communities - FetLor club in the community being a good example as a gang neutral environment where children can benefit. It is difficult to understand why only Independent schools are being targeted when every other charity is out of scope. That is a perfect example of inequality, unfair and not balanced.