

Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill

Page 2: About you

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

on behalf of an organisation

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Other (e.g. clubs, local groups, groups of individuals, etc.)

Please choose one of the following; if you choose the first option, please provide your name or the name of your organisation as you wish it to be published.

I am content for this response to be attributed to me or my organisation

Please insert your name or the name of your organisation. If you choose the first option above, this should be the name as you wish it to be published. If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

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Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.

Page 7: Your views on the proposal

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

Fully opposed

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

Please explain the reasons for your response

I am opposed to the bill because: 1. It will criminalise a significantly large section of Scottish society who believe that physical discipline of children can be done in a way which is loving, constructive and has a positive impact and effect on the child's behaviour. 2. The Bill represents an attack on the liberty and freedom of fathers to discipline their children and make correct and decisions on how to raise their sons and daughters based on love and rational thought. The Bill represents the thin end of the wedge of government interference in the most private of social units: the family - something which a free, democratic society should resist. 3. The Bill proposal does not take adequate and reasonable account of religious minorities within Scotland who, on the basis of religious principle, believe that the physical disciplining of their children is a divinely ordained requirement. This would include members of Scotland's Christian and Muslim communities among others. The proposed Bill represents an attack on the human rights of members of these communities to practice their religion.

Q2. Could the aims of the proposal be better delivered in another way (without a Bill in the Scottish Parliament)?

Yes (if so, please explain below)

Please explain the reasons for your response

If the Scottish Government is serious about tackling child abuse and assault, legislation and action should be targeted at those most children most at risk of harm. A Bill which will criminalise thousands of parents and members of religious minorities needs to be rethought. Steps such as education campaigns and support from health and social workers should be the initial position of a free, democratic country. This can be done without criminalising Scottish citizens and reducing the liberty of the people.

Q3. What do you think would be the main advantages, if any, of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

No Response

Q4. What do you think would be the main disadvantages, if any, of giving children equal protection from assault by prohibiting all physical punishment of children?

The main disadvantages of the Bill are:

- The criminalising of a large section of Scottish society who love their children and want to physically discipline them in a way which is both loving and effective in improving behaviour.
- The Bill represents an attack on freedom of fathers to be decision makers in the home as to how their sons and daughters are disciplined.
- It fails to recognise the views of members of religious minorities who believe physical discipline to be divinely ordained and instructed.

Q5. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have?

Significant increase in cost

Please explain the reasons for your response

The proposed Bill will represent an increased cost to the tax payer through increased monitoring of parents, prosecution of innocent and effective parents and a burden on social care and services where children are removed from parents.

Page 12: Equalities

Q6. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on the following protected groups (under the Equality Act 2010): race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity?

Negative

Please explain the reasons for your response

The Bill will have a negative impact on people with protected characteristics of religion and belief whereby the members of those minorities believe that physical discipline is required by the religion they practice. This would include members of both Muslim and Christian communities in Scotland.

Q7. Could any negative impact of the proposed Bill on any of these protected groups be minimised or avoided?

No Response

Page 14: Sustainability of the proposal

Q8. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably i.e. without having a disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impact?

No

Page 15: General

Q9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

No Response