

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".)

No Response

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

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 would like this response to be anonymous (the response may be published, but no name)

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

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

The proposed Bill would have significant implications for Christian parents. It would criminalise Christian parents who exercise their God-given right to use reasonable chastisement in the discipline and nurture of their children. For committed Christians the teachings of the Bible will take precedence over the whims of the state. Many loving Christian parents will continue to use physical discipline regardless of the civil law. As a church we would continue to teach that parents are responsible before God for the upbringing of their children. We would continue to teach from the Bible that the use of physical punishment of children is legitimate and sometimes necessary.

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

The question of parenting method should be left to parents and experts to debate and discuss. Parliament may help the ongoing discussion by making opinions available. It should not seek to silence a legitimate debate by criminalising the views and actions of loving parents who use physical punishment as a means of discipline.

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 advantage. To describe this as "equal protection" appears to be a political tactic to put a positive slant on what is essentially a heavy handed and illiberal proposal to interfere in family life. This is not a matter of equality or equal rights. It's about legitimate parenting methods.

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?

This would represent a major interference in family life.

This is not an "equality" issue. Children are not adults. Children need loving parents to train and correct them. The majority of parents currently use smacking as a means of discipline in certain situations so the Bill would criminalise loving parents.

Page 11: Financial implications

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 enlargement of the machinery of state to interfere in family life to this extent would involve significant cost.

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

Christians would be directly discriminated against by the passage of this Bill. Parents would be criminalised for following the teachings of the Bible, which requires physical chastisement to be applied lovingly when necessary.

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

No. The Bill should not be proceeded with. It is unnecessary.

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

Please explain the reasons for your response:

There is no economic, social or environmental benefit to a ban on smacking. Any implementation of this Bill will involve costs. The long term social harm from a smacking ban may have negative economic implications.

Page 15: General

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

This area is a legitimate area of conscience. The state has no right to interfere. There are already sufficient protections in place to deal with legitimate cases of child abuse or to prosecute parents for the unreasonable use of force in the discipline of children.

The loving application of reasonable physical chastisement is NOT equivalent to child abuse or assault. Every reasonable person knows this to be the case.

It is not only Christians but most people in this country oppose a ban on the use of reasonable physical discipline of children.