

Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Bill

Page 2: About you

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

an individual

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

No Response

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Henry Milewski

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

Please explain the reasons for your response

I think this reflects undue governmental intrusion into the lives of the people, and subverts the role parents play in the raising of their children. It also subverts freedom of religion. Most importantly, it is harmful to children.

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

No

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?

None. This language is deceptive. Nobody is advocating the right to 'assault' their children, as though children do not have 'equal protection' from 'assault' as adults! This kind of tendentious language reveals the proposal to be ideologically biased and invites distrust.

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?

Please note earlier comment. This language of 'assault' and 'equal protection' is deceptive and unacceptable from a supposedly objective governmental minister. It is an offence to all good parents who utilise smacking for the good of their children.

What you are intending to ask is: 'what would be the main disadvantages of criminalising parents who who smack their children within the bounds of reasonable chastisement?'

To that question I would answer:

Children will be harmed. One of the glaring features of British society today is the widespread disrespect children show towards their parents. As they grow up, this attitude towards lawful authority continues though it is expressed in different ways. This is harmful to the mutual good of society and to the children themselves.

My impression is that my parents generation perceive children today to be more badly behaved than in their day. I believe this is largely attributable to the laxity and inconsistency in the manner in which parental discipline is administered, if at all. The government should not undermine things any further.

My sister and brother-in-law, in England, have experienced this first hand. They have a daughter aged 2.5 and have endeavoured to teach her to respect their commands by being consistent in enforcing them (using smacking as appropriate), and she is a very well behaved child. A nearby neighbour girl of the same age, by contrast, is a terror to her parents (who make little effort to enforce any commands - the child understands she can get away with ignoring them most of the time).

Sadly, my sister has noticed that when her daughter is around this neighbour's daughter she starts to pick up her disobedient bad habits and so she now tries to avoid this influence as much as possible. Smacking has been key to the success my sister and brother-in-law have had.

Finally, I note the appeal to 'international' evidence against smacking. I believe the evidence is being misused and is subject to ideological pressures. Note the following information from Sweden:

"Those in favour of a ban often cite Sweden as a role model. It banned smacking in 1979 and as the first

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?

country to do so is a useful case study because there is more data available to assess the claims of anti-smacking campaigners.

They argue that reasonable chastisement teaches children that violence is acceptable. On this basis, we might expect the figures to show lower levels of violence among children after the ban. In fact figures from Sweden show the opposite to be true: child-on-child violence increased by 1,791% between 1984 and 2010.

In his critique of the Swedish attitude to parenting, psychiatrist David Eberhard argues that following the ban parents have become scared to say no to anything.

Studies show that after the ban children became significantly less accepting of any parental rights to discipline them through grounding or other restrictions. In 2000, only 4% of teens felt that their parents had the right to "threaten to forbid something" down from 39% five years earlier."

<http://www.bereasonable.wales/en-home/faq/>

Page 11: Financial implications

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

Some increase in cost

Please explain the reasons for your response

It is costly to police and criminalise parents who exercise reasonable physical chastisement of their children. It is also costly to provide new homes for children who are ripped away from their parents because their parents use smacking.

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

As a Christian, my religious liberty will be further curtailed. As I'm sure you are aware, the Bible enjoins the use of reasonable chastisement in the raising of children. To forbid it will forbid Christians from practicing their religion free from governmental intrusion. I fear my wife and I, along with other Christians we know would live in fear. Consider the recent case of these Norwegian parents as an example:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36026458>

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

Yes, if the bill is dropped.

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:
Please refer to earlier responses.

Page 15: General

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

None