

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 If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Margaret Murray

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

Research shows that measured physical discipline is a very effective way of helping young children to understand boundaries and appropriate behaviours. The methods used in the raising and teaching of children cannot be compared to behaviours we regulate towards adults. If that logic is followed then the concept of time outs, chores, confiscations etc will amount to imprisonments, slavery and theft. They must be considered in terms of their efficacy in relation to children's learning and development and there is no legitimate data which considers intentionally measured physical discipline to be harmful to children.

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

No

Please explain the reasons for your response

The aim is not appropriate. It is obviously wholly desirable to tackle child abuse in any way we can, but criminalising smacking is not the way to do this. Like any form of discipline, smacking can be abused to the detriment of the child, and will not work for some children. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT IS ALWAYS ABUSED OR DOES NOT WORK FOR SOME (MANY!) CHILDREN! The fallacy here is obtuse. Parents who are committed to raising their children in a loving and secure environment need to have the freedom to discern the child and the circumstances, and criminalising these parents would do far more damage to the children emotionally than physical discipline (within the bounds of the current law) ever could. I have an arts degree, a teaching degree, and am a stay at home parent of two young children. I have literally given my daily life to children and the care of children and can see first hand the benefits of appropriately administered smacking in my own home, as well as in the homes of friends. For my daughter, a smack is NEVER given without clear warning, or for anything she doesn't realise is unacceptable. It is a clear process of warnings, a brief discipline, followed by a clear talk about what happened and what went wrong, apologies and cuddles and reassurances, and steps for the future. We love each other immensely and never has any professional ever expressed any concern over her behaviours, wellbeing or our relationship. (To criminalise me and other parents like me for this is madness and will have untold repercussions without conclusive proof of unwitting damage.

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

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?

- A) criminalising good, loving and intentional parents
- B) refusing an effective disciplinary measure from children who would benefit from it
- C) obscene wastage of limited resources picking apart healthy, happy families
- D) causing serious long term emotional damage in the potential separation of loving families due to arbitrary and ill-researched legislation (as in the Bodnariu family case in Norway).

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

Significant increase in 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 are among many religions who believe physical discipline to be true to their religious teachings. The bill amounts to discrimination against these religious beliefs as it makes them illegal without any concrete evidence that considers their position fairly.

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

Yes- scrap the Bill.

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:

As outlined in previous responses to qs, it will be financially irresponsible to do a diversion of limited resources on an ill-researched scheme, and it will cause detrimental effects socially to intervene so severely in family life without any genuine data supporting the illogical aim.

Page 15: General

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

For the love of children, abandon it. Research it properly. Speak to parents who know why, when and how to physically discipline.