Consultation on the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill

About you
Individual

1 The Bill’s general principles

1.1 Do you support the principles of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill?

— No

1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

I should begin by stating that I stand alongside the majority of our population (as I understand), in opposing this effort to remove any form of corporal punishment from our nation. If this policy were an attempt to stamp out domestic violence or the physical abuse of children, I would not only appreciate the efforts being made, I would stand squarely behind it. However, this bill, if passed, would criminalise loving parents such as myself & my wife who occasionally use reasonable corporal punishment to make clear to our children the kind of behaviour that cannot be condoned or accepted in a home where behavioural boundaries are in place to create a safe and loving space for the building of family.

It’s no secret that many today are, in varying degrees, deeply concerned by the levels of delinquency and crime in the younger generation of today. What bothers me is that we seem to think that the removal of all deterrent, even now in the home (if this bill should be successful) will somehow improve this! The majority of young adults who were brought up in a strict and loving home environment (including myself, and I had a few sore backsides in my time) will eagerly step forward to defend our parents in their efforts to shape our character into what is upright & moral. Understanding that punishment is the result of misbehaviour is a sure way to prevent it! It worked with me, and it will work with this generation.
Of course, I understand that rage & violence on the part of parents MUST be quashed, and in such cases where young lives are broken & shattered by unloving & misunderstanding parents, efforts must be made to defend the helpless. But it seems to me that this is not the sort of violence you’re wishing to quell by proposing this bill (indeed, I appreciate the efforts already being made to tackle this form of abuse in our society).

I stand as testimony, along with many others, that loving discipline doesn’t produce dysfunctional children, rather it produces the opposite - a generation that understand right from wrong. You only have to go back a few decades to appreciate the heights from which our society has fallen. I will thank my parents for disciplining me and moulding my character for good - I love them for it. I think if you ask a vast majority of young people today, they would trade places with me in a moment if they had the chance. It’s not discipline that’s ruining this generation, it’s the lack of it (along with the love that accompanies that willingness to discipline).

1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?  
(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

Absolutely not, as stated above, the existing legislation already protects those who suffer abuse (as it should), so why the need for this bill? What then would happen to parents who opt to follow the dictates of their own consciences and the teaching of their own religions and choose to utilise corporal punishment in the home regardless of this bill? Would such loving, caring parents be liable to prison?

2 The Bill’s implementation

2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill?  
If no, go to question 3.1  
(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?  
(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)
3 Unintended consequences

3.1 Do you think there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

It would inevitably criminalise loving parents who choose to believe that reasonable corporate punishment (i.e. a controlled smack on the backside) is an appropriate means of teaching children the distinction between what's right and wrong.

4 Financial implications

4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum)? If no, go to question 5.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

It seems to me that if this bill is passed, the necessary work and investment already being undertaken to tackle genuine domestic abuse will be diluted by all kinds of unnecessary work, including that which will arise from this particular bill. Every accusation of corporal punishment will have to be considered, and such can only add to the existing pressures upon those employed to help root out domestic abuse.

5 Other considerations

5.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)