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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tystiolaeth i'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar gyfer craffu Cyfnod 1 Bil Plant (Diddymu Amddiffyniad Cosb Resymol) (Cymru)</th>
<th>Evidence submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CADRP-83</td>
<td>CADRP-83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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)

Disciplining children is crucial to their development into responsible members of society. There are already laws in place to stop child abuse - this bill does not help the fight against such abuse, rather it only criminalises parents who love their children enough to discipline them.

While some parents do not use smacking as a means to discipline their children, it should not be the role of the government to decide for the parent; that decision should lie with them solely. Interfering in this way further damages the relationship between parent and child, as it makes parent and child the same in the eyes of the law. However, this cannot, and should not be the case. If it were, surely then it would be illegal for a child to hit a parent - but, as we know, parents would not seek any legal repercussions for this, as they love their child. Likewise, the vast majority of children would be horrified and disturbed at this prospect - and every adult I know who was smacked as a child saw it ultimately as a good thing for them in hindsight, as they were unable to respond to verbal warnings and have the capability to reason in the same way as they do now. In addition, this bill would make parents and children alike very distrusting of government, seeing it as a malicious overseer rather than a reasonable and rational force for good.
It is painfully obvious that while physical abuse can harm a child in several ways, smacking does not. Only 11% of Welsh adults believe that smacking should be criminalised - again, such people are free to parent how they wish, but they should not dictate how others do.

This bill should be thrown out immediately, and the Welsh government should use their resources to address real and pressing issues regarding children, such as educational standards.

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)

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)

Police and social services are already under immense pressure - devoting a huge amount of resources to such a trivial act which the majority of people view as crucial to disciplining their child will inevitably result in their services being unable to deal with actual cases of child abuse and other serious crimes.

When smacking was banned in Sweden in 1979, child-on-child violence increased. This would not have happened if parents were free to discipline their children more effectively.
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)

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)