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

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

CADRP-265

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)

Basically, loving parents should not be treated as if they were child molesters motivated by cruelty.

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)

No. There is already legislation to deal with cruelty to children.

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)

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)

The proposed absolute smacking ban is unnecessary because there already exists legislation preventing cruelty to children. The use of a nineteenth-century definition of “reasonable discipline”, long since modified in several Education Acts, cannot reasonably be used to justify the proposed measures. The proposed legislation is an intrusion of the State into private and family life that has until recent decades been foreign to British democratic values. It represents an increasing degree of totalitarianism more akin to the old Soviet Union than to what has hitherto been characteristic of democracy in the U.K. One (perhaps unintended) consequence that could be brought about by the hugely expanded bureaucratic pressure on the police could well be the development of a Soviet-style system of State supervision involving children being encouraged by the authorities effectively to spy on their parents and to report back on any perceived infraction (defined as such by the children themselves) of increasingly draconian State regulations governing family life. It would be the beginning of a process that would make parenting and anything resembling a normal family life impossible.