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

Tystiolaeth i’r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar gyfer craffu Cyfnod 1 Bil Plant (Diddymu Amdiffyniad Cosb Resymol) (Cymru)  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

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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)

There has been a tendency for the state in recent years to interfere too much into family life. The Abolition of Reasonable Punishment Bill is one of them.

There are already measures in place under the law to protect children who are abused - and a corrective smack by a loving parent aimed at protecting a child from harm can in no way be deemed as child abuse. Parents should not be criminalised for what is often an involuntary spur of the moment reaction to a child’s wrongdoing.

The introduction of the bill to abolish reasonable chastisement will undoubtedly add to the workload of police and social workers - time which would be more profitably spent in carrying out their primary roles.

A 2017 ComRes poll showed that over threequarters (76%) of Welsh adults were against criminalising smacking with only 11% in favour, and this is hardly surprising.

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)
There is no need for any such legislation. The Bill is attempting to do what the law already does in protecting children from any kind of abuse, and the importance of this seems to be constantly ignored. All this Bill would achieve is to criminalise loving caring parents.

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)

There is a perfectly good barrier against the implementation of any such bill, and that is the fact that such a high percentage of parents are against it. It’s not the job of Government to set its own agenda in this way and to go against the will of the vast majority.

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)

It seems that very little account has been taken of any barriers/objections, and the vast majority feel that there is a determination to follow through on an agenda to ban smacking regardless of popular opinion, and without giving proper consideration to what is the primary role of parents in the bringing up of children. This is very wrong.

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)

Government has not fully realised the potential implications of its actions in this matter. Unless its plans are abandoned, we will see many loving parents going through the courts and professionals dragged away from important cases to deal with silly child correction cases.

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)

Obviously, the implementation of such a bill would lead either to increase in costs somewhere along the line or professionals having to choose what to put to one side in order to deal with the implications of having to enforce the requirements the smacking ban.
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)

I just want to reiterate that it is the parents' responsibility to bring up and discipline their children and they are best placed to know how to do it without the interference of government.