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 believe that the current law strikes a reasonable balance between a) allowing parents to choose from a range of suitable methods to discipline their children and b) child abuse. If the law is changed it will remove the distinction between a light disciplinary smack and extreme violence. The law already outlaws excessive physical punishment and there is no scientific evidence to suggest that the current allowable levels of discipline harm children in any way. I was disciplined physically as a child and I am thankful that I was. My own grown-up children would say the same. If this legislation had been passed 35 years ago both I and my loving parents would now be considered criminals for doing what we believe is in the best interests of our own children.

Furthermore, there are occasions when physical correction is essential to prevent sudden and immediate danger to children. The argument that the law that is applicable to adults should be extended to children fails to recognise that children are not adults and sometimes they need to be restrained and corrected to keep them safe. Surely, as loving parents, we can be trusted to know what is best for our own children in particular situations.
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 I don't! The current arrangements have worked well for many years.

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)

My main concern is the effect that the Bill may have on the police and social services, which are already at breaking point dealing with REAL cases of criminality and social problems. I would like my Government to focus on the problems that the nation already has without spending time telling parents what they should and shouldn’t do with their children. Where is the money going to come from for pursuing cases - and what cases of real criminality are going to be ignored to pay for it?

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)

No. I don’t think the Welsh Government has any idea what the true costs will be and it feels from the level of the man in the street that they don’t actually care as long as the Bill is passed - irrespective of the wishes of the electorate and the costs to our society.

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 is my conviction that the Bill will actually have the OPPOSITE effect to that intended. I appreciate that those supporting it are doing so from the best of motives but I would appeal to them to look at the scientific evidence. A substantial body of scientific evidence shows that the outcomes in countries that have adopted a smacking ban are far from positive and it appears that the reports that the government are basing their proposals upon have been very selectively chosen.
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)

The health service, the police, the social services in our nation are desperately in need of additional funding. At such a time I regard it as obscene that such large sums (and - in significant areas - unknown sums) are being committed to this proposal. Please - Please spend our money on things that are really important now - not on turning your ordinary citizens into criminals.

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)