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 Amddiffyniad 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?
— Yes

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)

Because I strongly believe that physical punishment breaches children's human rights and potentially damages their development. Children can be disciplined (guided about appropriate behaviour) extremely well without use of punishment particularly physical punishment. There is ample international research available to support the facts that physical punishment can be very harmful to children.

In New Zealand, Since the law changed, we have seen very satisfactory changes in attitudes about use of physical punishment - especially among parents but also gradually among the population at large. New Zealand children and adolescent behavior has not deteriorated over time.

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)

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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)

I am aware that authorities in Wales are being given misleading information about the effects on law change in New Zealand (New Zealand Law was changed in 2007 making it illegal to use force to discipline children).

The law in New Zealand has provision that give Police discretion not to prosecute for minor infringements. Even we cases get to court judges often do not convict but order parents to receive guidance and support.

There is no evidence that child on child violence has risen in fact recent research show drop in violent behaviour.

I do not believe child protection services are overwhelmed by cases of minor physical assault.

Parents are perfectly able to undertake normal parenting tasks. In fact the law allows parents to use physical restrain when essential as to stop a child running across the road or to remove a child from a dangerous situation (but this would not include hitting a child)

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)

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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)

Claims made about the impact of law change New Zealand by those that support use of physical punishment are deliberately misleading. In some cases information to support these claims simply does not exist - other claims are more complex and we do not have sufficient information to prove or disprove a claim. In no situation would the reintroduction of a law to allow children to be hit solve anything. Where problems with implementation arise the, if there are any, need to be addressed in ways that protect children and promote their healthy development. This does not include physical punishment.