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 Amdiffyniad 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-400</td>
<td>CADRP-400</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?

— 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)

I believe that the Bill to explicitly repeal the defence of “reasonable punishment” will protect children from all forms of corporal punishment and give them equal protection from assault as adults. Children have human rights, including the right to protection from all forms of violence. It is an anachronism that adults still have a legal right to hit children in 2019 and it must be remedied asap! We can’t tell parents and others not to hit children but still allow it in legislation, it makes for a very confusing message.

Hundreds of studies have shown that physical punishment does not improve ‘compliance’ but instead comes with a range of negative outcomes for children, which may follow them into adulthood. You cannot know whether receiving corporal punishment as a child “didn’t do you any harm” - how could one know how they would have turned out without it? ‘Light’ corporal punishment is not different from child abuse, it is simply on the lower end of the spectrum. Violence is violence is violence.

And of course, it hurts and is deeply unfair. It may be difficult to recognise that now as adults, especially if your parents who you still love and respect used it on you back then. But in truth we all remember the fear, pain and humiliation, the anger and the betrayal. We know now this practice is harmful and so we must put an end to it.
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)

Yes! Experience from the 54 states which have now enacted a legal ban shows that public education alone is not enough to significantly reduce prevalence of physical punishment. Studies have shown that public education must be accompanied by a prohibition in legislation to be truly effective.

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)

I don’t believe there will be any significant barriers to implementation. The explanatory memorandum clearly lays out the Welsh government’s plans which are well thought-out.

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)

I don’t believe a legislative text should lay out regulatory details of implementation. As said above, the Government has thought out an implementation strategy which will be ready to be put in place. The Bill itself deals with the legislative side comprehensively and with clarity.

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 don’t believe there will be any unintended consequences. The scaremongering claims of criminalising parents are not based in facts, as we have seen in the 54 states which have already prohibited. This Bill will protect children from violence and strengthen Welsh child protection systems.

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)
I would point out that it would be useful to also cost what savings this Bill will bring in terms of reducing the amounts spent on responding to incidents of violence. Preventing violence is less costly than responding to it.

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 hope this Bill will be adopted and implemented asap - Welsh children deserve it!