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)**

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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)

Children are not the same as adults, parents do many things for children that they do not do for adults, in order for them to learn how to behave as members of society. Smacking is not child abuse, it is a part of a wide spectrum by which parents exercise loving discipline. It is not good for children, their families or the wider society when children are not properly disciplined. Smacking is a means of warning children when there are dangers to themselves and others before they are of an age to understand reasoning verbally.

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. Current legislation already protects children from violence. A loving smack is NOT violence. Smacking was banned in Sweden in 1979 and child on child violence has been shown to have INCREASED since by 1791% . A 2017 ComRes poll found that only 11% of Welsh adults were in favour of a smacking ban - why are the majority being ignored? 139 countries worldwide allow parents to lovingly discipline their own children, Wales is not in the minority.
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)

Implementation of the Bill could overwhelm police/social workers dealing with such trivial cases that REAL cases of child abuse are missed.

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 parents who are trying to do the best for their children will be criminalised

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)

Yes. Children of families under investigation could be removed from their homes causing distress to all concerned. Parents could lose their jobs in such circumstances.

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)

As above that parents could lose their jobs if under investigation. The already limited resources of the police and social services will be stretched further, so that more important matters, including real child abusers are not dealt with.

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 current legislation which allows “reasonable chastisement” only protects parents who administer a mild smack. Any UNREASONABLE chastisement is already unlawful. If this defence is removed there will be a major interference in family life by the state which will have sad consequences for society