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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tystiolaeth i’r Pwylgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar gyfer craffu Cyfnod 1 Bil Plant (Diddymu Amdddfyniad 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-487</td>
<td>CADRP-487</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?**

— 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)*

As a parent and grandparent I believe the relationship between a child and his/her parents is a unique one. Parents know their children best. As a child I was disciplined on occasions with a smack and disciplined my children when they were young in the same way when necessary. My family home was a loving and caring one where I felt secure and never in danger of abuse. Similarly I and my wife have brought our children up in a secure and loving environment. Our three girls have gone on to have loving marriages and families of their own.

Criminalising parents for using reasonable chastisement in an unwarranted interference by the state in family life. Even the European Court of Human Rights have upheld the principle reasonable chastisement. I fail to understand the pursuit of a law which polls show is opposed by three quarters of the population.

In its consultation document last year the government admitted that a light infrequent smack in the context of a loving parent child relationship is not harmful. I find it difficult to see where the evidence lies for this law to be enacted.

The estimated £3.3 million to enforce this bill could be used to deal with the real needs of children and parents in our society.
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)

I can see no need for such legislation. The current law protects children from abuse. Excessive punishment is already illegal. If current laws were enforced rather than changed this would lead to a more satisfactory situation.

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)

Banning a mild smack in a loving context will lead to the criminalising of ordinary loving parents and could lead to the disruption of stable families. Will a parent who smacks their child be in danger of losing the custody of their children and even their jobs? How can a parent be considered a loving, caring, responsible adult now and in a few months time with no change in their behaviour be considered a criminal?

Will parents now be considered abusers and placed on some form of register? This will surely lead to real confusion in the laws covering real child abuse. The police services could be overwhelmed by having to follow up these cases when they are already overstretched in dealing with real abuse 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)
The finances that would be devoted to this bill will be money that cannot be used on tackling the serious issues that already face society. How much more pressure will be put on services that currently seek to tackle children at risk and in need?

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)

-