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

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

CADRP-547

About you
Organisation: Brynteg Village Church

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)

It treats child abuse and a loving smack as one and the same thing - the former should be punished, the latter should be supported

The experience of Sweden when they brought in a smacking ban only reduced the numbers who smacked children marginally - if this pattern were to be the same in Wales the police will be very busy bringing loving parents to court.

This will take police away from other crimes - particularly real child abuse.

Before attending a consultation in Llandudno I did a door to door survey around Brynteg (Wrexham) and 74% believed smacking (not lashing out at children) was up to the parents not the government - and less than 10% agreed with your proposals. Even the vast majority of those who believed smacking was wrong did not want it to be made a criminal offence, usually due to the pressure this would put on the police.

We believe it is morally wrong for Governments to interfere with parental responsibility - except in the cases of abuse. nearly every older person who I have talked to on the subject rightly says ‘smacking didn’t do me any harm’ Smacking is NOT child abuse but the action of
a loving parent seeking to bring up their children to respect parents, teachers, police, laws and all legitimate authority - and also seeking to protect the child itself

When my grandchildren were at primary school they were staying with us for a few days, and I had the task of taking them to school. On one of those days my youngest did not want to go to school - but I gently put her in the car and put her seatbelt on. By the time I had started the car she had taken the seatbelt off. This happened 3 times, and then I warned her I would smack her if she did it again - and I was true to my word - I smacked her, put the seatbelt on and drove her to school. To let her stay at home was illegal, to drive her there without a seatbelt on was also illegal - no amount of persuasion or 'bribes' persuaded her to put the seatbelt on - a gentle smack worked - but under your proposed legislation it would be. I would tell all parents to follow my practice and I would do the same again - would you criminalise me?

Children do not and should not have the same rights as adults - physical restraint is needed to stop children harming themselves - by going into the road, or touching something hot - and a smack is often the best deterrent and thereby saves children from harm

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 the present law protects children from child abuse

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)

How can the police cope with potentially many thousands of parents lovingly smacking their children, if this became a criminal offence - it is not only wrong it is dangerous - real crimes will go unresolved as a result

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
3  Unintended consequences

3.1  Do you think there are there 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)

If loving parents have a criminal record as a result of your bill, it will affect their lives, and will have a knock on affect upon their children - thus damaging rather than supporting children

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)

need more police, child welfare, court staff etc to carry trough this law

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)