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-568

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)

It is the parent’s right to choose how to discipline their children, not the state’s. This bill seeks to give a right by taking away a right from someone else. As this bill would stop a parent smacking a child it prevents a parent from placing an ultimate consequence to unacceptable behaviour that children, particularly young children, need in order to have a concrete understanding of unacceptable, extreme behaviour. As a society we already have unruly children and young people who have no fear of any consequence on their behaviour, taking away the right to discipline with a smack will increase this out of control behaviour. A smack is not a beating - there is a difference and responsible parents know the difference, they should not be criminalised for using a smack as a deterrent and punishment.

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. This bill, if enforced to an Act, will simply criminalise responsible parents who care enough for their children to administer a smack when other deterrents have failed. It will do nothing to protect children from those adults who beat children and use unnecessary force. There is no clear evidence that a smack harms a child emotionally, physically o
psychologically- plenty of adults now were disciplined with a smack administered by loving, caring parents who did not beat them, and these adults would testify to the benefit of this discipline in making them responsible citizens. Those adults who beat children and are physically abusive to children, sadly, will continue to do so. This bill would only criminalise the wrong people. It does not allow for the difference between a smack and a beating - and there IS a difference. It also puts a lot of power into the hands of children who can use this sort of thing as a way of punishing the adult for something entirely unconnected with physical punishment - ie if the adult has said ‘no’ to a request for a toy, an outing etc. Government backed organisations are not equipped to really find out when a child is lying and are ll too ready in these times to believe anything a child says.

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)

The rights of the parent/adult in loco parentis. This bill infringes on the right for parents to discipline their children as they see fit. This is the state taking more control than it should, it is dictatorial.

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. I think the Assembly for Wales has already decided it will pass this bill and this ‘consultation’ is merely a lip service. This move is really about the Assembly for Wales seeking to be different to the government on England.

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. I believe the consequences will be harmful to our children who will grow up with no serious consequence to their actions. They will grow without any fear of punishment and therefore become more unruly. Research in Sweden suggests that, since banning smacking and any form of corporal punishment, violent crime has actually increased. If this bill is approved we will create a society of anarchy and instead of children and then adults being in fear of serious consequences for unacceptable behaviour, the rest of society will be in fear of those very same children and subsequent adults of carrying out violent and/or emotional acts against them, including the false accusation of an innocent adult striking 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)

There are huge financial implications to any change in law - not least the time our MPs take debating it. All the bi-lingual documentation in debating and approving the bill. All the rush of actions by parents being brought to court (as there will be when children find they can actually punish their parent or guardian). This is a waste of time and money - smacking should continue to be allowed, there is no evidence to suggest that it is harmful in the long term, in fact there is more evidence to suggest it is actually beneficial for developing responsible adults.

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)

Yes. I believe the Assembly for Wales has already decided to pass this bill and that this consultation is a white wash. The consultation has not been publicised sufficiently to get a maximum of responses. Something this crucial to our society should be taken to referendum, the result of which should be upheld immediately. Putting something out on Twitter reaches a very small section of our society - it is exclusive not inclusive of everyone. This is unjust and undemocratic.