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) 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-569 CADRP-569

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)

I believe that parents' freedom to raise their children as they think is reasonable (without inflicting injury or lasting harm) should be protected.

This abolition consultation seems to have forgotten that reasonable punishment actually PROTECTS children. Parents have the responsibility to raise their children, to teach them how to be safe and how to treat others. Young children in particular do not always have the ability to reason through appropriate, safe behavior. When other avenues of discipline have been tried, reasonable physical correction can be the one thing that will get through to them. It is loving of a parent to deliver reasonable punishment rather than to allow their child to continue in dangerous and disruptive behavior.

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, I do NOT. The abolition of the Defense of Reasonable Punishment seems to confuse 'hitting' with 'reasonable punishment'. The Welsh law already provides protection for children
from 'punishment' that would cause them injury, which I DO support, but parents should not be criminalized for REASONABLE, non-injuring punishment.

In fact, I think there is very much a need for our law to protect the Defense of Reasonable Punishment. With the increase of behavior trouble in schools and society in general, we should not be trying to take away yet another reasonable means to instruct the next generation.

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)

Yes, I do. This bill will criminalize loving parents who use reasonable physical punishment, potentially tearing families apart simply because parents care enough to show their children very clearly that certain behavior is dangerous or unacceptable. When you undermine families, you undermine the foundation of society. When the family is undermined and modes of reasonable discipline are taken away, I believe that behavior in schools and society will only get worse. Just considering the 1,791% increase (over 26 years) of child-on-child violence in Sweden should caution us from following their example.

I also think that police and social services already struggle to identify children who are at risk. If this bill is passed, then they will only be distracted even more from children who are in significant danger while they investigate safe, loving families who use reasonable physical punishment. Linked to that, our prisons are already short on space and this bill would have loving parents added to the numbers of inmates.
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 will undoubtedly be financial implications. If the police and social services are over-stretched, there could be over-time to be paid and/or other staff to hire. More money will be required as the government investigates and rehouses children from families suspected of using reasonable physical discipline. If parents are jailed, there will be need for more facilities to house them.

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 am aware that a vast majority of the Welsh public do NOT support criminalizing smacking. If the government chooses to ignore this reality then they are in fact acting outside of their parameters. The Welsh government is supposed to represent its people, not ignore its wishes. If the government chooses to ignore a vast majority of their population, I suggest that they are actually over-stepping their role and oppressing their people. Reasonable punishment does not put children at risk, but the government ignoring the will of the people DOES put our free country at risk.