

Submission on Draft Human Rights and Antidiscrimination Bill

I wish to submit my thoughts on the above Draft Bill as follows:

In a free and fair democracy, the freedom to uphold a view which may be considered offensive to others should remain a personal right. This opinion does not support advocating violence or threats against those holding opposing views, yet the right to voice an opinion on a matter must remain inviolate.

To stifle such free speech could possibly mean that I may be unable to voice my opinion on issues concerning my faith, including the "rights or wrongs" in moral issues. The fact that others disagree with my opinion should not mean that I am unable to voice it.

To further widen the definition of "discrimination" to include insult or offence is likely to lead to spurious, and even malicious, claims of discrimination.

In a nation where we are learning to live side-by-side with people from all cultures and faiths, to open the door to allow people to claim discrimination because they are offended or insulted, must surely make integration more, rather than less, difficult.

To this end, I ask that freedom of speech and freedom of religion be protected from further erosion by the possible enactment of this Bill.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Drew