

Annex – FOI 202000110169

Item 1

Subject: FW: Smacking Bill

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 30 September 2019 10:49

To: Scottish Ministers

Subject: Smacking Bill

Could I please ask you to consider seriously as to whether smacking a child is a criminal offence. I believe very strongly that the decision as to whether to discipline a child by smacking is that of the parent, not the Government. In my opinion this is an unnecessary intrusion by the state into family life.

I was delighted recently to see the Named Person scheme scrapped and would like to

see this latest intrusion go the same way.

The existing law already criminalises parents who use unreasonable chastisement and

I fully support this but please allow loving parents to discipline parents as they see fit.

If you do support the Bill then at the very least I would ask that parents who smack are not prosecuted and an alternative to the criminal justice system is considered.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email.

Regards

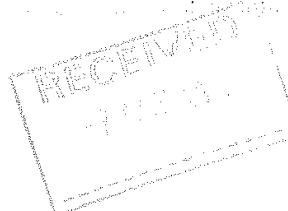
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Item 2

[Redacted]

3rd Oct 2019

Ms N Sturgeon MSP, First Minister
Leader of the Scottish National Party
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



Dear Ms Sturgeon

Re. Scottish Government Policy on the Criminalisation of Parents and Grand Parents via the Prohibition of “Smacking”.

Regarding the above, I note that once more the Scottish Government has been able to force though and publicise its own agenda without proper regard to the views of the electorate, whom it should represent. I have no doubt that you will justify this action on grounds of consultation but such consultation, as most people know, is merely representative of energetic activists and not the population as a whole.

I am appalled that you have sought to criminalise all well intentioned persons who have a legitimate right to bring up children to be responsible, fulfilled adults who contribute to society. The less damaging but still seriously misguided “Child Controller” legislation you tried to introduce has been scrapped, much to the relief of Parents and Grandparents. I now put it to you that you need to halt your “Parent Criminalisation” bill *immediately* and refocus your attention on the many social and economic issues which you were elected to address. Any other course of action will cause deep division and angst within our society and will unfairly scar and ruin many families in the years to come.

As I see it, the outworking of your “criminalising” policy will be far more destructive of childrens’ wellbeing than if no safeguards existed at all. It also seems to me that under the broadly accepted norms of human rights, that your proposed extreme legislation would be deemed unlawful if tested in a court of law.

I wrote to your predecessor of the dangers of SNP collaboration with quirky activists and political parties such as the Greens. As long as you continue to do this I’m afraid I cannot give you my vote. And by the way, I do *not* make a political threat in saying that - it is simply a statement of reality. The latter, I remind you, is not something you can expect from the Greens. They are, after all, the party who proposed taxing peoples’ gardens!!

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

Item 3

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 03 October 2019 09:49

To: Humza.yousaf@parliament.scot; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

Subject: Ban on Smacking

Good morning

I heard on the radio this morning you are planning to vote on a bill to ban smacking.

I feel passionate about this matter so I hope you will consider my views.

I'm afraid I do not believe that making smacking illegal will have any positive effect for children. I will explain why. The parents who hurt their children, will sadly continue to hurt their children-behind closed doors.

Parents who occasionally lightly smack their children are trying to discipline them. I appreciate there are other ways to discipline however by banning parents' powers you are preventing the fundamental act of teaching right from wrong- in certain circumstances this is appropriate.

All parents love and cherish their children and 99% care for them appropriately.

I do feel many children are now not taught right from wrong appropriately. The current knife crime in the uk is directly linked I believe.

Sometimes we need to say 'no' to children, and give a wee smack on the legs does not affect children in any negative way, I believe.

I feel this bill would be a waste of your time. I would love to see your time better spent looking at ways to help children and parents who need support. And help parents teach children morals and boundaries to prevent drug use and crime.

Thanks for your time.

Kind Regards
[Redacted]

Item 4

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 03 October 2019 17:26

To: Scottish Ministers <Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot>

Subject: How do i report child assaults?

Hi Mr Humza our Justice secretary can you please contact me by email, letter, or phone, i really need some Scottish justice advice you have now passed a law banning smacking children which will now be seen as a serious assault on a child, so when in the street now and i witness a parent smacking the wrist of a child who was ignoring the parents advice and was jumping in front of vehicles that is now a serious assault on a child who do i contact regarding this at the time??? DO I CALL 999 SAYING I'VE JUST WITNESSED A SERIOUS ASSAULT ON A CHILD??? JUST AS I WOULD DO WHEN I SEE A SERIOUS ASSAULT BY 2 ADULTS IN THE STREET??? need some advice please thank you.

[Redacted]

Item 5

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 04 October 2019 12:48

To: Scottish Ministers <Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot>

Subject: Equal Protection from Assault bill

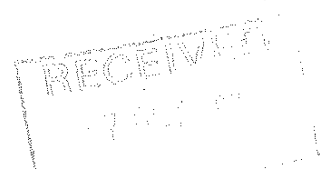
Hello Minister, It is very pleasing to see the Scottish Parliament reach a mile stone this week with the passing of the 'Equal Protection from Assault' bill. Having argued for many years that it is the removal of the cause, the lack of parental skills, that will be the real accomplishment and so I am also pleased to see already the calls for provision to tackle this lack of skill by providing parenting classes, however it is concerning to see term such as 'they can access help and support if they need it' as this begins to suggest that there is a category of parents that need help and the rest do not. It is vital that the provision of parenting skills classes are promoted across all the community, it is very unlikely that there is any parent, who if being honest, would not admit to wishing they had some more insight and understanding of the task of helping their children to grow and develop. An anonymous pole of the well adjusted intelligent community of parent collogues at Holyrood might prove informative. Making provision community wide will remove the stigma associated with 'targeted' provision and puts the information in the hands of all parents, leading to good practise by those who can adopt it readily acting as a natural catalyst for those who do not, peer influence. Having followed the example of Finland in introducing 'Baby Boxes' it would also be appropriate to follow their example and relate that provision to taking classes in parenting. Not all parents take up the provision there but there introduction is credited with a marked change in that nations educational attainment, presumably because as they develop young people remain engaged rather than in conflict with their communities efforts to see them develop to their full potential. These and other social intervention reasons mean that such provision across the board needs to be assessed in broad terms of savings, rather than a short term cost. Speaking from our own parenting experience having sought out classes early on, no they didn't make us perfect parent, but yes they did provide some invaluable insights which helped along the way. I like to think of it as a spaceship leaving on a long journey, being off course by one degree at this end may not seem very significant, but it certainly affects where it ends up. Wishing you well in your task, [Redacted]

Item 6

[Redacted]

4th October 2019

Ms Nicola Sturgeon, MSP
First Minister
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



The Children (Equal Protection from Assault Bill)

I hear you not infrequently ranting on the media on your strongly held views.

I have very little public voice, but I do now take the opportunity to 'rant on this page' at this latest and, in my opinion, the most stupid piece of legislation yet to come from your Executive in Edinburgh. In my opinion there have been many. One such, "The Named Person Act" had, unsurprisingly, to be abandoned.

Does the Executive undertake the 24/7 care of a family's children year in and year out to adulthood, OR bear the expense! NO, so how dare it legislate criminalising a parent or carer who administers good correction/guidance, which MAY indeed occasionally be a smack on a (well padded) bottom, occasionally being the operative word as many should not be needed! Again, how dare you Legislators interfere in family life in such a way. It is well nigh intolerable! Is it your intention to become a "Big Brother State"? If so, please have the honesty to admit that in your next Manifesto. Perhaps YOU don't know, but children are "adults in training". Being guided by a GOOD discipline can be most helpful to a child and should yield a harvest of self-disciplined adults. There is an adage: "Discipline is something that must go, some Psychiatrists say, but Discipline is a feat, sometimes accomplished through the seat!

I have heard it said that the SNP itself exercises a fair amount of 'discipline' over its adult MPs and MSPs. I am not privy to what that amounts to, but I can surmise that the aim is to have members 'toe' the "Party Line".

Your Executive, I think, would be better and more effectively employed legislating for and funding a Social Services Department which is able to be actively engaged in cases (rare) where serious abuse is likely. I do notice announcements from time to time where some blatantly dangerous, indeed tragic, situations have 'slipped through the net'. Is that incompetence, inefficiency, underfunding - or what?

I write as a mother of three adult, married, hard-working, contributing offspring and grandmother to their five offspring. Please see sense!

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

Item 7

[Redacted]

07.10,19

Dear Mrs Sturgeon,

Jesus once criticised the hypocrisy of the Pharisees of His time for straining out gnats from what they drank and at the same time swallowing camels. I wonder what he would think, and say, about a Government which criminalised parents who smack their children, which also acquiesces in the killing of hundreds of thousands of unborn babies and also apparently wishes to extend this facility up to the point of birth. I would be glad to hear your opinion on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

Item 8

[Redacted]

12 October, 2019

The First Minister,
THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT,

Dear Madam,

It was good to see the Named Guardian proposals being dropped. Brute force and common sense at last. As usual, you must take great delight and consolation in being first to ban smacking. Instead of striving to be first in a number of trivial projects and point scoring, serious attention should be given to the more difficult jobs i.e. looking after our economy, improving the health service, education, police etc. There was a time when we had the best education in the world - what happened? It's more about dumbing down/changing names, to increase success rates and less about decreasing red tape for teachers and enabling them to do a better job in the classroom. These are the people who will then have time to notice who needs extra care and attention. A long time ago, when I was at school, it was the teacher (one for almost 40 pupils), who highlighted a problem, discussed with Head Teacher and Heath Visitor/Social Work then responded when necessary. Simple!

Children and adults now have more free products than has ever been known. Someone has to pay at the end of the day. If a child is living in poverty which is ridiculous in this day and age, their parent should be given guidance, instruction and support. It started with breakfast for some/all. Now it's meals throughout the year as it may be the only hot food these children get. Who are these parents? You said it so you must know. What are they doing with the money they get? If they're not working, they have time to prepare economical and nutritious food. It's up to you to sort it rather than making everything free without any responsibility. They should be part of a parenting programme or something and non participants lose their free products. Your attitude of providing for all in case children are stigmatised is completely wrong and a system to avoid the problem could be readily implemented.

As for your free university fees - shame on you! We are British NOT European. It is a very sad day when we cannot include people from all points in the "United Kingdom" whilst at the same time, cannot get enough foreign visitors who reap the benefits and then go home. Perhaps there should be a little encouragement to stay and work awhile after qualification perhaps?

The thinking of this Government is more than skewed and unfortunately, the sensible people of Scotland have just to put up with it - for the moment anyway. Hopefully, real life is catching up very soon.

[Redacted]

Item 9

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 October 2019 21:07

To: Scottish Ministers <Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot>
Subject: Smacking of children

Dear Minister, I know that protecting children is paramount and smacking of youngsters can in many ways get out of hand but, we are now in a situation whereby unruly kids now know that , parents, teachers and police have no powers of chastisement (an example in Dundee this week), where kids caused havoc in a pet store , even spitting on staff !! .

All this (goody, goody) is causing no end of problems for everyone and will only get

Worse as we will have no dicipline or respect for others, even adults just get a minimal sentence for quite serious crimes !! SO, no chastisement or deterrent for bad behaviour or crimes just leads to a very poor society and quality of life for law abiding citizens , also not good for visitors to our country. Respectfully yours,
[Redacted]

Item 10

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 04 December 2019 14:52

To: Scottish Ministers <Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot>

Subject: for attention of Maree Todd, MSP

Dear Maree

I am a lecturer at [redacted] and today my [redacted] students were out in [redacted] shopping centre doing a survey on the general public on their views on the smacking ban. They have written and conducted the survey themselves and have collected nearly 100 answers from a wide range of public opinion.

I am asking them to put their findings into a report and would love to share it with you, in the hope you can send us a reply. This would be great for student confidence to know that their hard work has meant something in the bigger picture. They are getting together to gather their findings next Wednesday and could provide you with the information then, if it would be of some interest to you. I will also attach the survey.

Would so love to hear from you, thank you in advance.

Yours,

[Redacted]

Item 11

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 14 December 2019 20:37

To: Scottish Ministers <Scottish_Ministers@gov.scot>

Subject: Smacking ban

Hi,

Just back from holiday in [Redacted]. There were a family sitting directly behind me. I take it there was mum dad and child about 5/6 years old.

Well he complained the whole flight about everything.

At one point he called his mum a F__k__ * Bas_____ because he wanted more sweets.

He had already had minstrels, crisps, coke, KitKat and several other things, mainly to try and appease him.

When he used that language towards his mum, she just said be quiet and I will give you what you want.

This went on for the duration of the flight.

If this continues throughout his young life, god knows what he will turn out to be.

No discipline, no direction, not knowing right from wrong.

No wonder there are so many ill-disciplined teenagers.

No guidance, no direction.

They don't even know if they would like to be a boy or girl or something else.

My parents taught me and my brother's right or wrong.

My son's were taught right and wrong and we have 2 lovely, exceptional children, now successful adults.

I wonder what this child will turn out to become.

He certainly is getting no help from his parents..

As usual you swerve the real problem with dangerous adults, and ignore their behaviour and try and put them along with normal parenting.

Thanks,

[Redacted]