

Response ID ANON-Z841-1VUM-Z

Submitted to Justice Bill

Submitted on 2025-03-21 15:03:10

Introduction

What is your name?

Name:

██████████

What is your email address?

Email:

██

If you are providing a submission on behalf of an organisation or business, please state its name.

Organisation:

The Committee for Justice has agreed to publish all responses as part of the survey results. If you would like to have your survey results anonymised and for us not to publish your name or organisation, please indicate so here.

I would like my views to be anonymous and understand that my name and organisation details will be withheld but my views will still be published.

Any other comments on the Bill?

Do you have any other comments or views on the Justice Bill?

Yes

Please provide any other comments or views you have on the Justice Bill here::

I support the call of the National Secular Society (NSS) to the Northern Irish Minister of Justice to repeal blasphemy laws as part of this Bill.

I ask for the repeal of the common law offences of 'blasphemy' and 'blasphemous libel' be included in the bill.

Northern Ireland is the only UK nation that still has blasphemy laws. They were abolished in England and Wales in 2008, and in Scotland in 2021. The Republic of Ireland abolished its blasphemy laws in 2020.

If blasphemy laws are to be repealed, any potential new offences relating to the stirring up of hatred must be accompanied by "robust and explicit protection of freedom of expression clauses", as they are in England, Wales and Scotland.

The presence of blasphemy laws in Northern Ireland "undermines efforts to repeal blasphemy laws worldwide", the NSS said. Blasphemy laws are used internationally to persecute religious minorities, the non-religious, those who leave or change their religion, or simply those who speak their mind. Repeal would show NI is committed to free speech, tolerance and democracy.

Amendment: Repeal of vagrancy legislation

Do you have any comments on the proposed vagrancy amendment to the Bill?

Not Answered

Please provide information to support your answer here::