

Response ID ANON-2Q6Z-6G6E-B

Submitted to Display of Flags and Emblems - Call for Evidence
Submitted on 2026-07-19 11:21:25

Clause 1: Removal of flags or emblems in the public interest

6 Do you agree with Clause 1 of the Bill?

No

7 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

The bill as written is deliberately vague leaving it open to a wide range of interpretations as to what constitutes "offense", "intimidation" or "public places". This would give immense powers to the department of infrastructure to interpret it in any way they want, and literally take down any flag on any public property for whatever reason so long as at least one person in the "vicinity" (again not defined) declares themselves offended or intimidated by a flag. Regardless what the drafters of the law say would be done, unless it is written into the law it is irrelevant. The civil servant using it can interpret it literally how they want if the words are not specifically defined. We have seen this with human rights law which has been interpreted in ways completely contradictory to what was originally intended and therefore it has been used as a political weapon by political activists.

Secondly, It is clear that the bill is motivated by a dislike of the union flag. Paula Bradshaw herself lists the union flag and paramilitary flags in her examples of her reasons for sponsoring the bill. I saw no examples of any other flags used in the news, just paramilitary flags and the union flag. The bill would not be used to removed the Irish flag, rainbow flag or Palestine flag which will conveniently not be deemed as intimidatory or offensive. The only flags I would agree falling under this law would be paramilitary flags and flags showing support for illegal/paramilitary groups. I would support a ban on that, but in no way should any national flag be banned or removed.

Furthermore, it is ridiculous that flying the flag of the United Kingdom would be deemed offensive or intimidatory in the UK. This would be like saying the French flag offends people in France or the EU flag offends people in the EU. This appears to be part of a concerted attempt by some to remove any symbols of Britishness in public spaces, especially going forward (as stated in the bill - new housing estates given as an example).

I also believe that this law may have the affect of motivating people that never put flags on their house to start doing so. I have never put a flag on my house as I have never felt the need to do so. However should this law be passed I would certainly consider doing so.

Many thanks

Clause 2: Sensitive places

8 Do you agree with Clause 2 of the Bill?

No

9 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Again "sensitive places" is open to interpretation by the department. It's too broad a term. The department and the the unelected civil servants in the department making the decision would have the ability to define what constitutes a sensitive area. All public places could technically be deemed sensitive as all faiths, genders and minority groups can access them and therefore claim to be offended. That is not workable and gives too much power to the department to remove symbols for any reason

Clause 3: Procedure for / notification of, or giving views on, flags or emblems

10 Do you agree with Clause 3 of the Bill?

No

11 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

This would create a lot of work for the department and civil servants. Sifting through information, claims and counter claims from all over the country. There is no need for creating this work and the taxpayer, certainly this one does not want to pay for the huge expense.

Clause 4: Code of Practice

12 Do you agree with Clause 4 of the Bill?

No

13 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Everything should surely be clear before any law comes into effect. If it's not clear it's a poor law. Why would a code of practice not be published until 18 months after it came into effect? The law is a poor law. I do not agree with it for the reasons previously stated.

Clause 5: Offence of obstructing the Department in removal of flag or emblem

14 Do you agree with Clause 5 of the Bill?

No

15 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

You're creating issues where there doesn't need to be any. What is likely to happen is aggravation and poor community relations when people come in to remove flags. How you would sell that as preferable to one person having to look at a flag occasionally that they may not like to me seems ridiculous. Generally in northern Ireland people know when they go into certain areas there will be more nationalist or more unionist and they will display things supportive of their culture. I personally don't like certain flags but I wouldn't call for all flags I don't like to be removed.

Clause 6: Request for assistance from police

16 Do you agree with Clause 6 of the Bill?

No

17 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

The police have more important things to do. If flags are not removed then there clearly would be no "breach of the peace" for the police to attend to.

Clause 7: Interpretation

18 Do you agree with Clause 7 of the Bill?

No

19 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

The wording is poorly defined (and deliberately so by the drafters of the legislation) as previously stated. All words can be defined by the department basically however they want. If one person says they are intimidated or offended there is no way the department can dispute that, then they are (in the words of the law) duty bound to remove the flag/emblem. Absolutely ridiculous.

Clause 8: Commencement

20 Do you agree with Clause 8 of the Bill?

No

21 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I disagree with the law and therefore the date the powers start are irrelevant.

Clause 9: Short title

22 Do you agree with Clause 9 of the Bill?

Unsure

23 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

The title of the bill is irrelevant.