

Response ID ANON-5X4P-3E5M-B

Submitted to Display of Flags and Emblems - Call for Evidence
Submitted on 2026-08-21 10:21:09

Introduction

1 Confirmation of having read the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee's Privacy Notice.

I confirm that I have read the privacy notice.

2 What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

3 What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

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

Organisation:

5 The Committee for Infrastructure 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, along with any identifiers in the response, but my views will still be published.

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

6 Do you agree with Clause 1 of the Bill?

Yes

7 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Public places should feel welcoming to everyone. Often flags are put in public places to mark territory and to demarcate who is welcome and who isn't. Northern Ireland is becoming increasingly diverse in the modern day, we should be ensuring the country is for everyone who lives here, not a select few.

As stated in the Bill, allowances should be made for flags to be displayed during celebrations, especially those that celebrate the coming together and uplifting of people from many communities, such as the Fleadh Eireann, or Pride.

People should also be allowed to display emblems and flags on their own property and in their own communities.

It's worth stating not all flags are created equal. There are flags of celebration and inclusivity (rainbow pride flags), of solidarity with other communities (Palestine flags) and there are flags of intimidation (paramilitary flags) and outright hatred (nazi flags). Of the 2 dominant communities in Northern Ireland, one community is more likely to display welcoming, inclusive, supportive flags, and one is more likely to display flags that telegraph intimidation and bigotry.

I would be concerned about this legislation being used to police the former kind of flags and not the latter.

Clause 2: Sensitive places

8 Do you agree with Clause 2 of the Bill?

Yes

9 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Much the same as before, these are places everyone has to sometimes be in for every day life. They should feel welcome there and not intimidated by territorial flags or emblems. Displays that communicate solidarity, community and welcoming should be considered allowed.

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

10 Do you agree with Clause 3 of the Bill?

Yes

11 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I think it is reasonable to allow the public to opine on whether flags or emblems should be removed, as many people will have differing views on what is offensive or intimidating and what isn't.

It may be important to ensure people from multiple backgrounds can submit their views, so that the portal cannot be abused by a few select people from any specific side to force an outcome.

Clause 4: Code of Practice

12 Do you agree with Clause 4 of the Bill?

Unsure

13 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I feel like this could come into effect sooner than 18 months, but I understand that flags and emblems are a very sensitive subject in Northern Ireland and it may be necessary to be careful and thorough in the introduction of new legislation.

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

14 Do you agree with Clause 5 of the Bill?

Yes

15 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Communities that display intimidating emblems are known to intimidate anyone who may try to interfere with or remove those emblems. It will be important that the workers who have to carry out these removals feel safe to do so and are well protected.

Clause 6: Request for assistance from police

16 Do you agree with Clause 6 of the Bill?

Unsure

17 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Where paramilitaries or other gangs may pose a threat to workers this might be necessary, but police involvement could also be seen as intimidating to some communities. I think this would have to be handled carefully and respectfully.

Clause 7: Interpretation

18 Do you agree with Clause 7 of the Bill?

Unsure

19 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

I would be concerned about some organisations being proscribed terrorist organisations on the UK's list, when they have not committed acts of terrorism, but only engaged in property damage or the right to protest. This could be used to unfairly target some emblems rather than others.

Clause 8: Commencement

20 Do you agree with Clause 8 of the Bill?

Unsure

21 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Clause 9: Short title

22 Do you agree with Clause 9 of the Bill?

Yes

23 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible: