

Response ID ANON-6F3V-5R4J-A

Submitted to Display of Flags and Emblems - Call for Evidence
Submitted on 2026-09-15 22:53:48

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:

Kilcoole Rosascoole Mountcoole Duncoole

Living in a mixed area where flags go up during July and August can be difficult. Our street is next to a predominantly Unionist area, but it is not an exclusively Unionist area itself. The residents of our street have varied political, cultural and national identities, and I think it is important the shared public space reflects that diversity rather than appearing to belong to one particular community.

I fully understand that people feel culturally proud and that they should be able to express that identity. I have no issue with people displaying flags on their own homes if they wish to do so. However, I feel there is an important distinction between personal expression and placing flags throughout shared public spaces, particularly on lampposts. In the context of NI, flags can carry meanings beyond cultural celebration and can sometimes be experienced as sectarian, intimidating or as a way of marking territory.

While the neighbouring area has its own traditions, I feel that the extension of those displays into neighbouring mixed residential areas is increasingly difficult. It can feel intimidating and, importantly, it does not represent our street as a whole. It may reflect the views and cultural pride of a small number of residents, and I respect their right to feel that pride, but it does not represent my culture or identity, nor does it necessarily represent those of many others living here.

There is also a practical consequence that is difficult to ignore. Living in an area where large numbers of flags are displayed can affect how the neighbourhood is perceived by people who might otherwise consider living here. As a homeowner, it is frustrating to feel that the character and appearance of the area, and potentially the value of our homes, can be affected by something that does not represent the whole community. Fundamentally, I believe people are entitled to celebrate and express their British, Irish, Unionist or Nationalist identities. At the same time, shared residential spaces should remain as neutral, welcoming and inclusive as possible. That, to me, is more representative of what a mixed community actually is.

I also think this principle should be applied consistently. Shared streets should not be used for territorial political signalling, whether that involves a Union Jack, an Irish tricolour, a UVF/UDA-related emblem, or any other political or community symbol. This isn't about asking anyone to give up their identity or their right to celebrate their traditions. It is about recognising that a mixed residential street belongs equally to everyone who lives there.

Given our history, particularly the association between flags, interfaces and territorial identity, I would much rather see our street remain neutral and welcoming to all communities. We should be free to express our identity on our own property, but communal streets and lampposts should not be treated as though they belong to one side.

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:

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 feel this is vital as addressing the community group putting them up achieves little. We need outside support to avoid feeling intimidated when we wish to challenge this practice.

Clause 4: Code of Practice

12 Do you agree with Clause 4 of the Bill?

Yes

13 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

This seems practical and reasonable.

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:

Consequences are necessary.

Clause 6: Request for assistance from police

16 Do you agree with Clause 6 of the Bill?

Yes

17 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Clause 7: Interpretation

18 Do you agree with Clause 7 of the Bill?

Yes

19 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Clause 8: Commencement

20 Do you agree with Clause 8 of the Bill?

Unsure

21 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Is it 2028 or 2029? Two dates are given?

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: