

## Response ID ANON-9C5J-5V4X-J

Submitted to Display of Flags and Emblems - Call for Evidence  
Submitted on 2026-07-15 17:28:37

### 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:

Throughout history and across the globe, flags have been powerful symbols that represent the identity, culture, history, and values of groups of people. In Northern Ireland they have long been the visible representation of our two cultural traditions, and remain a highly sensitive and potentially extremely volatile issue, a true powder keg.

There is clearly the potential for the proposals to inflame community tensions, at a time when the situation is relatively calm. The population are more focussed on struggling with proposed benefit cuts likely to aggravate poverty, increased cost of living and deteriorating public services. These are the real issues for the Assembly to address. We don't need a recurrence of public disorder with the inevitable negative impact on businesses, tourism, transport, health services and disruption for ordinary citizens .

The reality is that compliance with this proposed framework will be limited and the consequent burden of removing flags and emblems will inevitably fall on the PSNI, already inadequately resourced, understaffed and struggling to deal with drug related crime , shoplifting and burglaries. Sadly, the likelihood of attacks on the police during such removals is very significant and such disturbances will , as has frequently occurred in the past, provide an opportunity for paramilitary elements to escalate tensions and incite violence for their own ends. What is the opinion of the PSNI ? Are they going to be given the manpower and finance to carry out these additional duties ? That seems unlikely given the current funding situation of PSNI .

How and who is going "to ensure that displays are for the purpose of celebration and commemoration , and for a reasonable time period" ? What are the estimated costs of your proposals? We are currently in a dire financial situation with our NHS services the worst in the country, patients are dying in ambulances and A&E departments. Special needs children can't get appropriate school places, school buildings and roads need massive investment. I don't believe scarce resources should be wasted on such a proposal which has not been clearly thought through.

Each community has the right to be offended by the others flags and emblems as they have been for centuries, but no-one is being hurt or killed by a Union flag or an Irish tricolour on a lamp post. I am content to be offended in the interests of maintaining peace and avoiding the death or injury of a police officer.

### 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:

Please see comment on clause 1

### 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:

The reality of such a structure is that it will be manipulated by extremists on both sides to their own ends , with a sadly predictable outcome. Why does anyone think it is likely to be agreed ?

### 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:

Agreement on this issue will not be achievable sadly

#### 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:

Potential to cause civil disorder with risk of injury/ death

#### 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 are already over stretched and under resourced . They, as usual, will inevitably become the target for violent attacks if forced into this role

#### Clause 7: Interpretation

18 Do you agree with Clause 7 of the Bill?

No

19 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Terms are vague, inappropriately defined and unrealistic

#### Clause 8: Commencement

20 Do you agree with Clause 8 of the Bill?

No

21 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Disagree with entire bill

#### Clause 9: Short title

22 Do you agree with Clause 9 of the Bill?

No

23 Please provide information to support your answer here

Accessible:

Irrelevant legislation