

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Community Relations](#)

[Consultations](#)

Home Affairs

House of Lords Grand Committee Debate

Assisted Dying

includes

col GC69 **Lord Warner:** ... there is also a lack of symmetry between governed and governing. Survey after survey for a decade or more has shown that the public want some form of change to legalise assisted dying for terminally ill people who are competent to make that decision. The recently published 2010 British social attitudes survey showed that 82 per cent of the public support assisted dying. ... In 2006, 33 per cent of participating Peers voted in favour of the Bill on assisted dying of the noble Lord, Lord Joffe. In 2009, 42 per cent of Peers who took part in, or listened to, the debate on an amendment to the Coroners and Justice Bill to safeguard those who assist people going to Switzerland to die voted in favour of it. In the Commons, a higher proportion of MPs now seem to support change than in 1997, when Joe Ashton brought forward his Bill on doctor-assisted dying. ...

col GC71 **Baroness Campbell of Surbiton:** ...Not a single organisation of or for disabled and terminally ill people supports a change in the law. Does it not seem strange that those identified as beneficiaries of assisted dying are not insisting that their organisations campaign for a change? ... When we campaigned for equality we used the slogan, "Nothing about us, without us". Now we feel that we are on the receiving end of a campaign waged by people fearful of disability and terminal illness. With the exception of a few individuals, it is a campaign wholly without us. ...

col GC72 **The Lord Bishop of Durham:** ... We do not see in the press the old lady who last summer told me several times that she just wanted to go to sleep and not wake up, but who eventually made a full recovery and celebrated her 63rd wedding anniversary last month and greeted her sixth great-grandchild last week. Had we been in Holland or Oregon, someone might have "compassionately" given her a paper to sign and the deed would have been done. I declare an interest: the lady in question is my mother.

Last summer I sympathised with her view-her desire to die-but I shuddered at the thought of speeding her on her way. That would not have been compassion but, rather, collusion with distorted desire. The assisted suicide lobby does not have a monopoly on compassion. I believe that it distorts the notion radically. The genuinely compassionate course includes the remarkable work of palliative care, in which we in this country are field leaders, particularly through the hospice movement. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100203-gc0005.htm#100203117000285>

col GC80 **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice (Lord Bach):** ... I and the Government have made clear on previous occasions that our view is

that any change to the law in this area is, of course, an issue of individual conscience. It is rightly a matter for Parliament, rather than government policy, to decide. We therefore take a neutral view when others seek to change the law. ... the question of holding an independent inquiry on the issue is not as straightforward as it may seem. I hope that noble Lords will appreciate that, whatever a Government may say, it may not be perceived as neutral for us to facilitate any such action. Even if we remain entirely neutral on the moral issues involved, the very fact of setting up such an inquiry would be seen by some as tantamount to a policy decision that the law should be changed. In the debate, it was interesting that those in favour of change were very keen on an inquiry and those who were against change were equally keen for there not to be one. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100203-gc0006.htm>

Welsh Assembly Questions

Faith schools

after 2.50pm **William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the role of faith schools in Wales? OAQ(3)1205(CEL)

Leighton Andrews: The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the historic and current contribution that maintained schools that have a religious character make to education in every part of Wales.

William Graham: You will know that more than 50,000 pupils attend faith schools in Wales, and that independent research shows that faith schools perform at a slightly higher level than the Wales average. The Church in Wales provides 168 schools, which are highly valued by parents of different faiths and of no faith at all. A number of Islamic and Jewish faith schools across the United Kingdom do an excellent job of promoting high educational standards. How is your Government acknowledging the important contribution that faith schools make to raising educational standards and promoting social cohesion in Wales?

Leighton Andrews: It is important that we recognise the role that faith schools play within an overall comprehensive education system. I was pleased to meet some of the bishops last week when they visited the Assembly, and they were keen to stress their continuing support for Church in Wales schools. Such schools are an important part of the sector. We are committed to a comprehensive education sector in Wales, but we recognise the role of faith schools within that.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=165296&ds=2/2010>

[TOP](#)

Community Relations

Welsh Assembly Question

Community Cohesion

after 2.10pm **Val Lloyd:** What is being done to promote community cohesion in Wales? OAQ(3)1035(SJL)

Jane Hutt: In December 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government launched 'Getting on Together—a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales' along with an accompanying action plan. A community cohesion fund of £2 million for 2009-10 has been developed and allocated to local authorities throughout Wales, with further funding until March 2012. ... The key point to this is to prevent the culture that has caused such crimes to take place. 'Getting on Together', which is the title of our community cohesion strategy, recognises hate crime, which can be linked to poor community cohesion. We are working in partnership with Safer Wales and

the Welsh police forces to tackle the underreporting of hate crime. ... The funding is there for local authorities and I hope that they will use it, based on the evidence of what is coming forward, and that the police will be fully engaged.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=165296&ds=2/2010>

Welsh Assembly Government

The Tenth Annual Report on Equality 2008 – 2009: Working for equality in Wales

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/1002030809eqreporten.pdf>

[TOP](#)

Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

**** Children, Schools and Families Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/childrenschoolsandfamilies.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/008/amend/pbc0080402m.255-261.html>

**** Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/constitutionalreformandgovernance.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/004/amend/pbc0040302a.777-779.html>

**** Crime and Security Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/crimeandsecurity.html>

Scottish Parliament Justice Committee: Report on Legislative Consent Memorandum

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/justice/reports-10/jur10-02.htm>

**** Equality Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/equality.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldbills/020/amend/su020-vra.htm>

**** Flood and Water Management Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/floodandwatermanagement.html>

First Reading, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100203-0004.htm#10020377000336>

Scottish Parliament

End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated

Communities and Local Government: Creating a Single Equality Scheme for 2010 – 2013 (closes 28 February 2010)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/987402.pdf>

Proposal to amend the Licensing Act 2003 to simplify the procedures for Licensing Statements; Interim Authority Notices; and Temporary Event Notices (closes 9 February 2010)

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6498.aspx

Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 2010 (closes 15 March 2010)

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6605.aspx

Equality Bill: Draft Codes of Conduct (2 April 2010)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legislative-framework/equality-bill/equality-bill-codes-of-practice-consultation/#1>

Equality Bill: Draft Guidance (16 April 2010)

<http://ehrc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

Death Certification, Burial, and Cremation (Scotland) (closes 21 April 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300112/0093686.pdf>

[TOP](#)

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charity SCO29438