



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01727

Name of petitioner

Frances Nixon

Petition title

Reporting crime in Scotland

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce legislation that would ensure all citizens in Scotland have a legal duty to report a crime they have witnessed.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Contacted MSPs, Bill Kidd, Annie Wells, Pauline McNeill, Patrick Harvie, Anas Sarwar and Adam Tomkins asking for support.

Petition background information

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 1929 –1968

We live in the Social Media Age, no longer in communities where we know our neighbours thus blurring our sense of responsibility towards them. Reports can be found about witnesses to racism, robbery, assault, murder and rape doing nothing to change the course of events. Social media is used as a tool to harass, intimidate and bully sometimes leading to victim suicide. Mobile phone footage is downloaded on to social media, aired live, viewed by thousands while onlookers cheer criminals on.

Media outlets have reported incidents of abuse and assault related to race, religion, age and sexual orientation on our streets, care homes and on public transport. Reports of bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace are of scandalous proportion with caregivers and charities involved. These events have one thing in common, witnesses. Witnesses who saw and heard and did nothing to either intervene or report the incidents at the time.

The politician, orator and political thinker, Edmund Burke (1729–1797) stated "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that the good do nothing" resonates through time and should be taken to heart by all who uphold the Law. If we did, the law-abiding citizen would take back control of society and some criminality could be stopped in its tracks. Evil does thrive when the good do nothing

tracks. Evil does thrive when the good do nothing.

We appear to be sliding towards a “mind my own business” society with the criminal fraternity clapping their hands in glee. Perhaps by doing nothing we could be considered partners in crime by omission. What would it cost us to call the Police and forward mobile phone footage, even anonymously? As reporting becomes the norm negative reaction to it would lessen each day.

Criminals including racists, bullies and sexual predators continue down their destructive paths because they can; they are given permission by those who do nothing. It is time for organisations and individuals to recognise that they have moral and legal obligations towards their fellow beings.

I believe that Scots Law must legislate to accommodate societal changes. This could be achieved by considering a rethink of omission (defined as ‘a failure to act’) within the Law through the introduction of a Law of Omission Bill to incorporate some moral and civic omissions with criminal omissions making them legally enforceable to ensure every person recognises the rights of all by working with and for the law.

Reporting crime immediately would save lives, years of victim torment, Police investigation time and public money. It would bring successful prosecution and a reduction in crime. It should be a “common sense” law.

There are many practical obstacles to such a Law and it may meet with horror and opposition. However, even if only debated it may still serve a purpose; to remind people that the law is to protect them and that they must play an active role within its structure.

Unique web address

<https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01727>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

01 / 08 / 2019

Comments to stimulate online discussion

- Do you think its worth discussion to raise the profile of victims and the lack of justice for some?
- Have you had experience of crime? Were there witnesses who would not come to your aid? Did you find this difficult to deal with?

