

Equally Ours statement on the publication of the Rights Removal Bill

22 June 2022

#HumanRightsOurRights #RightsRemovalBill

The Government's proposed 'Bill of Rights' is a Rights Removal Bill. It is a deeply damaging Bill, that will take protection away from us all. It bears little relationship to the weight of the evidence submitted to the Government that overwhelmingly shows changes to the Human Rights Act are both unnecessary and harmful.

We all want to live in an equal, just and fair society, where governments and public bodies respect, protect and fulfil our human rights. We have the right to effective access to justice and a fair hearing.

The Human Rights Act is an essential tool that empowers ordinary people to stand up to people in power, and to create a stronger, fairer, more compassionate UK.

It gives us the ability to hold governments and public bodies to account when they fail to uphold our rights. It allows the courts to find the right balance between individuals' different rights, and between individual rights and the collective rights of society.

Being able to challenge governments and other public bodies and hold them to account is at the heart of our democracy. The Human Rights Act guarantees a sensible and transparent balance between the roles of the government, of Parliament, of public bodies, of the courts.

The Government's proposals will take away our essential rights and freedoms. It is time instead for the Government to recognise that the Human Rights Act provides both the foundation for people to live together freely and fairly, and a safety net that protects us all.

We call on the UK Parliament to reject these unnecessary and harmful proposals. It should press the Government to commit instead to:

1. Maintain the balanced and effective framework for securing our human rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act.
2. Proactively raise awareness of our human rights, and support a public dialogue on how they can be fully realised that is grounded in fairness, equality and justice.
3. Deliver the long overdue Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.
4. Consider how the models of incorporating additional rights being developed in Wales and Scotland, such as the rights of the child and economic, social and cultural rights, could be applied to the UK as a whole.