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Proclaiming hope and truth

Our work challenging Kim Leadbeater's assisted suicide Bill has kept the team very busy. We are briefing MPs on the key points arising from Committee stage and on the strength of feeling against her proposals. It is clear that the more people know about the Bill, the less they like it.

Through our clear resources and programme of local church meetings, we are also ensuring that Christians – especially church leaders – are fully aware of the immense danger assisted suicide poses to society.

We enjoy widespread religious liberty and freedom of expression in the UK, but should not take this for granted. The prevalence of abortion censorship zones and proposals for a new definition of 'Islamophobia' have left many people increasingly concerned that free speech is being eroded.

Our new legal case on behalf of Northern Ireland pastor Clive Johnston defends the hard-won freedom to preach the Gospel in public. Preaching Christ crucified is a stumbling block and an offence to many, but it is not against the law.

Controversies leaving MPs with doubts over assisted suicide Bill

MPs are growing increasingly concerned about Kim Leadbeater's dangerous assisted suicide Bill, with multiple safeguards being rejected by the Committee tasked with scrutinising the legislation.

The Bill would allow adults in England and Wales deemed to be terminally ill and with less than six months to live to get help to kill themselves.

As many as 30 MPs who voted for it in principle are now worried that the Bill requires medics to offer assisted suicide to their patients.



Others are indignant at the way the Committee has excluded expert witnesses who disagree with assisted suicide. It has been accused of 'heavily skewing' the witness selection towards those in favour of the Bill.

However, the greatest outrage came after what was billed as the 'ultimate safeguard' – a High Court judge to approve assisted suicide requests – was ditched.

Several MPs noted that this measure had persuaded colleagues to back the Bill at Second Reading.

Labour MP Florence Eshalomi wrote on X: "The key safeguard that was used to persuade MPs who raised valid questions about the bill has now been dropped. To say this is worrying is an understatement."

The Committee is currently considering amendments to the Bill, with hundreds already proposed and more expected.

New Bill requires home-ed parents to report Sunday school attendance

Parents in England who home educate could be required to inform state officials if their children attend Sunday school or play for a football team.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill would require local authorities to create a register of home-educated children. Their parents would have to specify how much time they spend teaching them and provide details of anyone else providing education. Church attendance and involvement in sports clubs are also expected to fall under the bureaucratic rules.

The Christian Institute warned the



plans could interfere with the human rights of both children and parents.

Deputy Director Simon Calvert said: "It doesn't make sense to require officials to discriminate against them when they are simply seeking to provide an education in the best interests of their child."

During a debate on the Bill, Conservative MP Rebecca Smith likened its provisions on home education to using 'a sledgehammer to crack a nut'. She said: "many constituents who have written to me have opted to home-educate and are doing an excellent job and are deeply

concerned about the proposed over-regulation that they face".

Munira Wilson, the Liberal Democrats' spokeswoman on Education, added that the Bill must ensure that data collection "is strictly necessary and proportionate and is being used appropriately".

The Institute cautions NI Executive to 'tread carefully' on equality law

The Christian Institute has warned that plans to consolidate existing equality laws in Northern Ireland must be handled very carefully to avoid undermining religious liberty.

Solicitor-Advocate Sam Webster told Stormont's

Committee for the Executive that "drawing together" the Province's "patchwork of equality law" into a single piece of legislation could undermine the work of churches.

During the passing of the Equality Act 2010, errors made it more difficult for churches

in Great Britain to understand their rights and freedoms. In that light, Mr Webster urged the Committee to pay particular regard to the impact of possible changes.

He reflected that, when the Fair Employment and Treatment Order was passed in 1998, nobody had ever envisaged the Ashers Baking Company case ending up at the Supreme Court.

He asked: "why should the citizen have to go all the way up to the UK Supreme Court in order to get the law clarified, in order to defend his or her rights to freedom of expression or religious freedom?"





In case you missed it



The Colin Hart Lectures

Iron sharpens iron:
Examples of Christian fellowship and friendship from David and Jonathan to the Cambridge Seven.
📍 the.ci/IronSharpensIron



Prosecuting parents and pastors

How plans for a new 'conversion therapy' law could impact family life and gospel freedom.
📍 the.ci/ProsecutingParentsandPastors



Shocking arguments for assisted suicide

An expert panel considers some of the arguments put forward by advocates of assisted suicide.
📍 the.ci/ASshockingarguments

Govt urged to reject chilling 'Islamophobia' definition

The Government has been urged not to adopt a highly controversial definition of 'Islamophobia' because it would threaten free speech.

Shadow Justice Secretary Robert Jenrick raised concerns that the definition, which claims Islamophobia is "rooted in racism" and "targets expressions of Muslimness", would have "a chilling effect on freedom of speech".

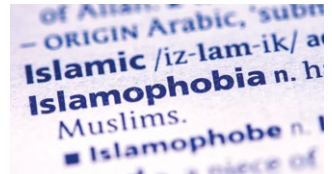
Former Labour MP Khalid Mahmood, one of the first Muslims to be elected to Westminster, has also argued that it would not help to "tackle discrimination".

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner has launched a working group to advise on

tackling allegations of racial and religious hatred, with particular focus on Islamophobia.

In response to Mr Jenrick's concerns, the Government said it would outline any updates on its position "in due course".

The Government had recently rejected a Home Office-commissioned report calling for a wider definition of extremism to cover "behaviours and activity of concern" such as alleged "conspiracy theories".



Govt rejects plan to give parents freedom to see teaching materials

In February, the Government rejected an amendment to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill that would have given parents in England a legal right to see materials used to teach their children.

Schools Minister Catherine McKinnell

claimed: "There is no evidence of a widespread problem that would justify the extra burden and bureaucracy it would create for schools."

Separately, the Education Secretary has announced she will implement "key" aspects

of the previous Government's Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act. The law established a scheme enabling people to seek compensation if they were cancelled on campus but had been put on hold following the General Election.

Bridget Phillipson said the Government will proceed with a "workable, robust complaints system" that does not expose universities to "disproportionate" costs.



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Mum's appeal win protects daughter from trans drugs

A mother has successfully protected her gender-confused daughter from being given trans drugs.

The Court of Appeal overturned a previous High Court decision, concluding that the mother's concerns should not be set aside, at least until private clinic Gender Plus completes its assessment of her daughter. The 16-year-old is now protected from the drugs until she turns 18, pending another court ruling.

Keira Bell, a former patient at London's disgraced Tavistock gender clinic, recently threatened the



Health Secretary Wes Streeting with legal action if he doesn't ban the supply of cross-sex hormones to children.

Pressure is also growing on the NHS to abandon its plans to expose vulnerable children to experimental puberty blocker drugs. Critics of a proposed trial warn that prescribing the drugs to gender-confused youngsters is

unethical and unjustified.

According to GP records, the number of gender-confused children in England soared between 2011 and 2021.

By the end of the period, the number of children diagnosed with gender dysphoria had risen from one in 60,000, to one in 1,200. More than half had anxiety, depression or a history of self-harm.

Cutting drug crime is also tackling addiction in Wales

A multi-agency initiative to tackle organised crime in North Wales is helping people get off drugs.

North Wales Police targeted drug gangs in a deprived area of Rhyl, hitting supply. Addicts are now struggling to get hold of drugs and instead are asking for help to kick the habit.

Chief Inspector Dave Cust said: "Many drug users want to finish with drugs and it's an important part of this project that we're also supporting them and putting them in touch with the right people".

Think tank The Centre for Social Justice recently called on the Westminster Government to halt the slide towards decriminalisation and strengthen law enforcement's role to address illegal drug use.



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Leadbeater's stacked committee shows no interest in safeguards

COMMENT

Kim Leadbeater's dangerous and unpopular assisted suicide Bill would allow adults in England and Wales deemed to be terminally ill and with less than six months to live to get help to kill themselves.

To date, the Committee appointed by Leadbeater to scrutinise her own Bill has rejected all but the very mildest safeguards.

Protections for the homeless and those with Down's syndrome: rejected. A prohibition on encouraging or manipulating someone into assisted suicide: rejected. A requirement to meet a palliative care consultant: rejected. A requirement that there must be 'reasonable certainty' over the six-month diagnosis: rejected. Even requiring capacity to include the ability to understand key details was rejected. And there are many more besides.

In contrast, the Committee hadn't even begun to undertake line-by-line scrutiny when Leadbeater announced she was axing what she had marketed as her 'ultimate safeguard' – sign-off for



assisted suicide applications from a High Court judge.

It was a move typical of the whole approach to this Bill. The Committee itself is disproportionately weighted towards those who support assisted suicide, including two Government Ministers.

During oral evidence, the witnesses were similarly heavily skewed towards those in favour of the Bill. The Royal College of Psychiatrists was initially excluded, and opposing witnesses subsequently found their evidence misrepresented by pro-Bill MPs.

Yet they listened eagerly as the architect of New South

Wales's 2022 assisted suicide law claimed that the practice is a "form of suicide prevention", and that it benefits the palliative care system. Danny Kruger MP pointed out that palliative care funding was actually cut by AU\$249 million in 2023.

On more than one occasion MPs have been berated for talking about assisted suicide rather than the more palatable and confusing 'assisted dying', despite the fact the legislation amends the 1961 Suicide Act. Arch Bill supporter Kit Malthouse remarkably claimed that 'suicide is only suicide if it involves a healthy person taking their life'.

The Orwellian-style wordplay is just one more example of how the Bill's supporters are set on doing their utmost to push through a law with no regard for the consequences.

Veteran Labour MP Diane Abbott, who is not a member of the Committee, has branded the Leadbeater Bill "one of the most pernicious pieces of draft legislation". She also called it "deeply flawed" and said it has been "blatantly mishandled". It is hard to disagree.

PETER'S STORY

Peter Sefton-Williams was misdiagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease by two doctors. When he was told he might have just six months to live, he planned to visit Dignitas or commit suicide himself. He later discovered he actually had the treatable auto-immune disease multifocal motor neuropathy. Peter says: ***"Doctors are fallible. It's no use saying they're the kind of gold standard and will always get it right, because they don't".***



CI backs pastor facing prosecution for gospel preaching in censorship zone

The Christian Institute is providing legal support to a retired pastor facing prosecution for preaching the Gospel in one of Northern Ireland's eight abortion censorship zones.

Pastor Clive Johnston, 76, was preaching from John 3:16 near Causeway Hospital in Coleraine on Sunday 7 July 2024 when he was cautioned by police. An officer claimed Pastor Johnston was breaking the 'Safe Access Zones' law, even though he had



Pastor Clive Johnston

made no reference to abortion.

The zones were introduced in 2023 after pro-abortion lobbyists claimed they were necessary to protect abortion

centres' staff and visitors from protestors.

On 21 March, at Coleraine Magistrates' Court, the grandfather of seven denied a charge of seeking to 'influence' people

accessing abortion services.

In a statement, the Institute's Simon Calvert said: "We have amazing gospel freedom in this country and we encourage Christians to use that freedom so that more people will hear about the love of God.

"That's why we've taken on this case. Prosecuting someone for preaching John 3:16 near a hospital on a quiet Sunday is an outrageous restriction on freedom of religion and freedom of speech."

Parents risk being turned into criminals under proposed England smacking ban

Activists are once again seeking to criminalise parents who tap their child on the back of the hand, claiming it is abuse.

Jess Asato MP has been seeking to introduce a ban by amending the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

The Westminster Government recently confirmed it did not plan to ban smacking in England. Minister for School Standards Catherine McKinnell said it will consider the issue when Wales

publishes an assessment of its 2022 smacking ban, which is due by the end of this year. But she emphasised that abusive parents are already caught by existing legislation and called it "absurd" to suggest that the current law

could be used as a defence in cases of serious harm or murder.

The Minister also said the Government should consider the views of those who might be "disproportionately affected" by changing the law.



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Tear off and keep

Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

SUNDAY

PRAY With thanksgiving for all of God's blessings on the UK.

MONDAY

PRAY For dangerous legislation on assisted suicide to be rejected.

TUESDAY

PRAY Thanking God for His gift of marriage and the blessings it brings.

WEDNESDAY

PRAY That families would remain free from intrusive state interference.

THURSDAY

PRAY That plans to restrict preaching and prayer through a new 'conversion therapy' law would be dropped.

FRIDAY

PRAY For our work supporting the freedom of Clive Johnston and others to publicly preach the Gospel.

SATURDAY

PRAY That the Lord will bless the staff and work of The Christian Institute.



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