

PE1623/F

Iain Campbell email of 21 November 2016

I wish to declare my unequivocal support for Petition No. PE01623, and a cessation to the archaic practice requiring unelected Church nominees to be appointed to Local Authority Education Committees.

As a Humanist, I wish to live in an inclusive society, tolerant of all beliefs and none; and it is because of this that I believe in the robust separation of Church and State so that all may live free of persecution and intolerance.

As someone born in the Western Isles of Scotland, who has experienced first-hand what life can be like, as a non-believer, living under the yoke of rampant Presbyterianism, I am utterly horrified to learn that this is even a question for debate.

In my view, the automatic appointment of Church nominees simply stacks-the-deck and is, therefore, an example of unfair privilege, which is neither democratic nor inclusive. And, the very fact that these appointees need never declare a conflict of interests makes a mockery of transparency, rendering the entire process a sham.

I believe school is a wonderful place to teach kids of all creeds and backgrounds about the world's great religions, if only to teach them about the great diversity their world offers, and to instil in them such noble values as tolerance, compassion and an appreciation for and love of difference. I also believe school is the best place to teach our kids the humanities and sciences that will equip them for adult life.

A school, however, is not the place children should be receiving religious instruction, unless the goal is to indoctrinate them, polluting their minds and impairing their ability to develop critical analysis skills. The job of religious instruction falls to parents and the Church. We need only look West, to America's Bible Belt, to see just what religious interference has done to education, particularly the sciences, and to some parts of the East in which young girls are still denied a proper education.

Our society is comprised of numerous cultures, many faiths and no faiths. Giving the Christian Church, or any faith for that matter, exclusive and unfettered access to young and impressionable minds is a sinister form of interference.

Let's keep Church dogma out of school, out of education committees, and in church where it belongs. Local Authority Education Committees should be transparent, democratic and inclusive—anything falling short of this is simply dishonest.