

PE1623/T

Humanist Society Scotland letter of 9 January 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this petition.

Humanist Society Scotland supports this petition, and would urge the Public Petitions Committee to make representations to the Scottish Government that the necessary legislation should be repealed.

HSS's position on this is well known, and we have previously provided evidence to the Committee on the basis that current demographic trends mean the practice of appointing religious representatives is vastly out of step with Scottish society¹.

It is also worth correcting an error in the [submission from the Church of Scotland](#), who claim that "the views of faith groups and that may include secularist, humanists and the non-religious who all have their own belief systems and creeds, are taken into account to inform Local Authority Education Committee decisions." The Church of Scotland have previously suggested that Humanists and other non-religious group be given representation on education committees, in a similar way to religious groups. HSS, as Scotland's largest national charity representing non-religious people, is completely opposed to this. Such a change would require legislative change anyway, as the current legislation only allows representation from religious organisations with "churches and denominational bodies having duly constituted charges or other regularly appointed places of worship"².

HSS has submitted a response to the Scottish Government's education governance review which covers issues raised in this petition³.

¹ <https://www.humanism.scot/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/HSS-petition-PE1498-response.pdf>

² <https://www.humanism.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/HSS-Response-to-SG-Governance-Review.pdf>

³ <https://www.humanism.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/HSS-Response-to-SG-Governance-Review.pdf>