



Nicola Sturgeon MSP
The First Minister and Leader of the Scottish National Party
Scottish National Party HQ
Gordon Lamb House, 3 Jackson's Entry
Edinburgh
Scotland
EH8 8P

CC: Rachel Heydecker

April 26th 2017

Dear Nicola Sturgeon MSP,

The future of human rights protections for children is uncertain. As children's rights alliances, which between us represent over 350 organisations across England, Wales and Scotland, we want to highlight how the Human Rights Act and rights currently protected through European Union (EU) policy and law are critical to protecting and supporting the children we work with.

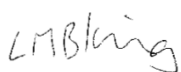
When children in care are the victims of abuse, an issue widely publicised in recent years, we can use the Human Rights Act to help ensure their safety. When children are threatened with having to live separately from their parents because they have been made homeless – losing a safe, warm home that most of us take for granted – the Human Rights Act 1998 has ensured that families are rehoused together. It's terrifying for children when they witness or are accused of a crime. The Human Rights Act has ensured the criminal justice system is fairer so we can protect children caught up in these situations.

On a very basic level, human rights give us the power to ensure authorities step up and protect children when something goes wrong.


A plethora of EU policy and legislation also currently helps children to thrive and keep them safe in many ways: from protections for child victims of trafficking, and air pollution reduction targets, to toy safety standards, and maternity rights.

We would be deeply concerned by any plans to weaken our ability to protect all children by removing the safety net of the Human Rights Act or diluting the rights children currently enjoy through our membership of the EU. As a political party that has championed the rights of children we urge the SNP to include a clear commitment in its 2017 General Election manifesto to safeguard the Human Rights Act and ensure there is no regression from legal safeguards for children once we have left the EU.

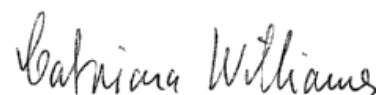
With best wishes,



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