

I welcome the draft of the libel reform bill, however I note with disappointment that the draft appears to be weaker than the equivalent legislation in England and Wales in a number of areas, and that while it leans in favour of freedom of speech, in my opinion it does not do so as much as it should.

Defamation law should at a minimum be at least as strong as the equivalent E&W legislation, and preferably should be stronger.

In particular::

- I welcome the new public interest defence, but consider that it should be strengthened;
- I welcome the proposals which prevent public bodies from bringing actions for defamation;
- But I am concerned that the rights of businesses are still far too strong. Indeed I would suggest that they should have no rights to bring actions just like public bodies

Yours sincerely

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