

**Submission 63**  
**Loyal Sons of Ulster LOL No 44**

Our Orange Lodge has just been made aware of the existence of the document "Making a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland". We understand that the NIHRC did not contact the Orange Order at any stage in drawing up this document.

We are appalled that the NIHRC has excluded and ignored the views of the largest Protestant and pro-Union organisation in Northern Ireland. We would have thought that you would have been at pains to solicit our views in order to make the Human Rights Bill inclusive of all of the community in Northern Ireland. Instead you appear to wish to deliberately ignore our views and exclude us from input to what is arguably the most important piece of legislation ever to apply to Northern Ireland.

We understand also that, consistent with your apparent policy of ignoring our views in general, you have in particular ignored a topic which is of great interest to us. As a Lodge and as an Institution we express our culture through parading. We understand that the above mentioned document has made no specific reference to the Parades issue. Perhaps you could explain why this is the case.

All these matters lead us to the conclusion that, for it to act in this partial way, the composition of the NIHRC must be biased against the Protestant and Unionist Community. Could you please let us have the names of the members of the Commission with a résumé of each of their backgrounds so we can see for ourselves exactly how broad based the Commission is? Could you please indicate which member has special experience or knowledge of the Parading issue from the point of view of the Protestant community?

Despite the shabby treatment we have had at the hands of the Commission we are determined to play our part in shaping the type of Society we live in.

The Bill will have a profound influence on our Society and will be above all future legislation. It must be got right and, even if it requires time to do so, then that will be time well spent for which future generations will thank us. A Human Rights Bill with broad-based support can be of tremendous benefit, a Human Rights Bill without that support will do positive balm. It will be perceived as sectarian and will simply be a source of ongoing trouble and problems for our society in the future.

To allow comment from our organization will require consultation with all of our membership - which runs into tens of thousands - and cannot be done in a few days or even a few weeks. We understand that the Document has taken 2 years in preparation with the help of legal and other experts and with government funding available to you.

**As a voluntary organisation without these resources we feel it is reasonable to ask for a further year to allow us and others to input to the document and the Bill.**

**We also request that you send 10 copies of the document, 10 of the summary document, and any other information which may be useful,** so that we can start the process within our Lodge of considering the document and producing helpful input to it, both as an individual Lodge and as part of the Orange Order as a whole.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Douglas Black  
Secretary