



## JOINT COALITION UPDATE ON PART 3 OF THE POLICE, CRIME, SENTENCING AND COURTS BILL ('PCSC BILL')

APRIL 2022

Opposition to Government attempts to restrict our right to protest continues at full steam with the House of Lords sending back amendments for a third time to scrap the noise trigger contained within Part 3 of the PCSC Bill.

Beyond receiving widespread criticism from over 800,000 members of the public signing petitions against this Bill, ex-police chiefs and senior advisors, three UN Special Rapporteurs and the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, Part 3 of the PCSC Bill has received resounding opposition at every stage of the parliamentary process. MPs and Peers from all parties and affiliations have voiced their concern about provisions such as the noise-trigger that, should this pass unamended, will enable police to impose conditions on a protest or demonstration that is deemed to be too noisy.

As voiced by Lord Pannick QC at Report Stage, “the ability to demonstrate while making a noise is a very valuable safety valve in our civil society. If you close off that safety valve, you are going to cause a far greater mischief than is currently the case.” This was further echoed by Lord Deben in the most recent debate to consider amendments to the Bill: “One of the first human rights is that I can walk with lots of other people to say that something is wrong. For the police to have the powers to say that we cannot, because it might be too noisy, is wrong.”

We welcomed the Government’s belated concession to remove the nebulous concept of ‘serious unease’, believing this can never be grounds for limiting dissent. However, as demonstrated through further Government defeats in the House of Lords, this concession does not go far enough and may actually lower the threshold for restricting protest for there is no need for alarm or distress to be ‘serious’ before a condition can be imposed.

**The month of April presents a critical window of opportunity for MPs and Peers to maintain the strength of opposition to Part 3 of the PCSC Bill, urging the Government to concede in the context of a forthcoming prorogation of Parliament.**

As a coalition spanning the human rights, privacy, criminal justice, democracy, racial justice, children’s rights, international development, environment, freedom of speech and expression, violence against women and girls, refugees’ and migrants rights, community, and faith sectors, **we are calling on Parliamentarians across the Commons and Lords to continue voting in favour of amendments to remove the ability of police to restrict noisy protest and demonstrations.**

Protest stands at the heart of how we stand up to power, from protests taking place globally to oppose the Russian invasion of Ukraine, recent gatherings in Parliament Square to voice collective concern about the ongoing cost of living crisis or people striking for climate justice. We urge MPs and Peers to use this final window of opportunity to protect our right to protest.

You can find previous briefings [here](#).