**INSERT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS HERE**

Date: **INSERT DATE**

Re: Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill 2022

Dear **INSERT TD NAME,**

As you will be aware, on 28 October 2022, the Government released a new bill titled the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill 2022 (hereinafter referred to as the “**Bill**”).

Having considered the contents of the Bill, I conclude that the Bill is designed to:

* abolish freedom of expression, including speech, by criminalising thought and speech which the Government disagrees with;
* legislate against crimes, which the Government wishes to label “*hate crime”* for the first time in Irish law; and
* create new, aggravated forms of certain existing criminal offences, like assault, coercion, harassment etc, where it is believed that those offences are allegedly motivated by hatred of a protected characteristic.

At the outset, let me be clear that this Bill is nothing more than an attempt to control thought and speech through criminal penalty and to create a hierarchy of justice depending on how many minority groups a person belongs to.

History has taught us that laws such as these have led to death, destruction and civil unrest in other countries, and to think that this country will be the exception to the rule is at best foolish.

Also, I find the inclusion of Section 11 of the Bill to be the most insincere and deceitful part of this proposed law for the following reasons:

* the inclusion of section 11 is designed to ensure the Bill is passed by both Houses of the Oireachtas, regardless of how this section will be applied in practice;
* the inclusion of this section 11 is an attempt to fool the opposition parties and TD’s into accepting that section 11 is intended to protect “genuine” freedom of expression; and
* the Gardai will entirely and wholeheartedly disregard section 11 when they are contemplating prosecutions. I make this assessment partially because the Gardai have gone so far as to task themselves with investigating and recording non hate crime incidents already.

In this regard, I refer you to An Garda Siochana website where a “*hate crime*” is described as: -

“*Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to, in whole or in part, be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on actual or perceived age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender*.”

Whereas, a “*hate incident*” is said to mean: -

“**any incident which is not a crime**, but which *is perceived by any person to, in whole or in part, be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on actual or perceived age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender.”*

Given that the Gardai have already assumed the task of investigating incidents which are **NOT** crimes, to suggest that the Gardai will utilise section 11 of the Bill to protect freedom of expression is deceitful at best.

To conclude, the purpose of this letter is to place on the record my firm disagreement with any restriction on freedom of thought or speech and to advise you that I will not, under any circumstances, abide by any law which seeks to criminalise thought or speech in any way. The purpose of this letter is therefore not to ask you to **VOTE NO** to this legislation (although this would be a wise decision) but to advise you that should you Vote Yes, you will be responsible for large scale civil unrest in this country.

I would advise that you to seriously consider the contents of this letter and consider the legacy you wish to leave behind, because the people are watching.

Yours Sincerely

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**INSERT YOUR NAME HERE**