



**LOGOSSCOTLAND**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Buffer Zone Bill introduced – Concerns raised**

Today sees the publication of Gillian Mackay’s long-awaited Bill to restrict those with profoundly held beliefs from engaging in consensual conversation, or even praying, within 200 meters of an abortion facility. This has caused concern among many groups that believe that abortion harms women, and that the unborn child has a right to life - and also among freedom of speech campaigners.

Shona Haslam Chief Executive of Logos Scotland comments “While we understand and appreciate the sentiment behind this Bill and the need to ensure that no woman ever feels subjected to harassment, which is already illegal - especially when facing an already-traumatising experience, we raise concerns about the implications that this Bill has on freedom of speech, thought and freedom of religion. Of course, it is never acceptable to intimidate or harass women who are going through an incredibly difficult time, but neither is it right to criminalise those who are simply praying or offering charitable support services outside of these clinics. We have seen cases in other areas where individuals who are silently praying on pavements have been arrested by the police for what could be considered a “thoughtcrime”. We urge legislators to ensure proportionality and balance when considering all of those involved in this incredibly difficult issue. This is not an easy task and I look forward to the debate in Parliament, we will be discussing these concerns with MSPs as they consider these questions.”

Shona Haslam

Contact: 07930313002

Email: [shona@logosscotland.org](mailto:shona@logosscotland.org)



07930 313002  
[shona@logosscotland.org](mailto:shona@logosscotland.org)  
[www.logosscotland.org](http://www.logosscotland.org)