

#SP6 – Conservatives vow to repeal parts of Hate Crime law

As part of their election campaign today the Scottish Conservatives say they will repeal parts of the Hate Crime Act passed in the last parliament since they threaten free speech.

The party also wants to amend the law so that women have protection from hate crime.

The Scottish Conservatives say that there is no protection in the legislation for things said in the privacy of your own home. They also say that in relation to women who are often targeted by hate crime on the grounds of their sex, the law does not recognise sex as an aggravating factor.

Scottish Conservative justice spokesman Liam Kerr said: “This scandalous SNP law gives no defence to people for what they say in the privacy of their own homes.

“Yet it was backed by Labour, the Lib Dems and Greens. The Scottish Conservatives successfully fought to remove other extreme elements from the legislation before it was forced through.

“We are committed to repealing every single line that threatens free speech. We are on the side of the public, with 9 out of 10 Scots cherishing free speech and recognising it as a fundamental cornerstone of our democracy.

“This shows the danger of an SNP majority at Holyrood and confirms that we are the only party strong enough to stand up to them.

“If the SNP get their way in this election they would have unchecked power and, as this bill proves, that is a terrifying prospect.”

Scottish Conservative candidate for Glasgow Provan Annie Wells, speaking to the media in the city’s Springburn Park today, said: “I am appalled that women are not given the same protection as other groups. This cannot stand and we will do everything possible to fix this SNP law.

“None of us question the need for genuine hate crime to be punished but we believe this act is dangerous and goes too far but, crucially, also fails to protect women.

“SNP justice secretary Humza Yousaf’s hate crime law is the most controversial in the history of the Scottish Parliament, It is an affront to free speech that shames Scotland.”