

Parties launch final bid to stop SNP imposing a snooper on every family

A LAST-DITCH bid will be launched at Holyrood tomorrow to scrap SNP plans to appoint a 'state guardian' for every child in Scotland.

A series of amendments to the Bill has been drawn up limiting the involvement only to cases where there are 'safety, legal or wellbeing' concerns for a child.

The Tories will also attempt to persuade MSPs to abandon the plans entirely for teenagers aged 16-to-18, and give parents the right to appeal against the appointment of a guardian.

Yesterday, leading theologian Professor Donald Macleod, former principal of the Free Church College in Edinburgh, said the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill would pave the way for the state to become 'Parent Superior'.

The Evangelical Alliance, which represents two million Christians from 79 different denominations across the UK, has also warned

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that the Bill will 'fundamentally endanger the rights of families in Scotland' if passed.

MSPs will decide tomorrow whether or not to ignore warnings from the Alliance and the Church of Scotland, the Catholic Church and the Free Church.

Under the proposal, the NHS will appoint a health worker to act as a 'named person' for every child until the age of five.

The responsibility will then pass to councils until the child reaches 18, with teachers expected to be asked to take on the role.

The measure is designed to ensure any potential cases of abuse or developmental difficulties are spotted and acted upon at an early stage. But many claim it would breach the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Tory MSP Liz Smith, who is spearheading the fight against the plan, said public opposition

has increased significantly in recent days.

'There is absolutely no need for every young person in Scotland to have a named person and that is why the Scottish Conservatives have opposed this policy,'



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she said last night. 'We should be concentrating our efforts and taxpayers' money on supporting our most vulnerable children and not on imposing a named person on families who are doing a very good job in bringing up

their children.

'That is why there has been such strong opposition from parents' groups, churches and families. They do not want the balance of responsibility tipped in favour of the state.'

Professor Macleod added: 'No one wants to minimise the evil of child abuse - even one instance is an instance too many.'

'But does this justify the emergent philosophy that the state, not the parent, is the true guardian of our children and that, notwithstanding the appalling record of state-run children's homes and detention centres, the government should now have the privilege of being the Parent Superior?'

A Scottish Government spokesman said: 'There is no intention of imposing a named person's advice or support on families, but rather ensuring the individual, usually already known to the family, offers a focal point where parents can go for information or assistance whenever required.'

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