



04/06/2009

EQUALITY BILL COMMITTEE HEARS EVIDENCE ON RACE

On 2nd June, the House of Commons Public Bill Committee took evidence on the Single Equality Bill. Race on the Agenda (ROTA) and Runnymede were asked to stand as witnesses to cover race.

Dr. Theo Gavrielides, Chief Executive of ROTA warmly welcomed the Bill but expressed concerns that certain provisions might be weakened during the Committee and Report stages. ROTA also proposed several amendments that are believed to be necessary in strengthening the provisions of the Bill.

"We are concerned with the limited scope of the Bill", Dr Theo Gavrielides said to the Committee. "The Bill inherits the confusion caused by the Human Rights Act as to what constitutes a public authority and hence leaves a significant section of Britain's most vulnerable groups unprotected". As it stands, the Bill will not cover private or voluntary organisations that are contracted to deliver public services.

ROTA also asked for enforcement bodies additional to the Equality and Human Rights Commission to be explicitly listed in the Bill. These could include the regulators and inspectorates which could help move public providers' process focused approach to race equality and equality to a more outcome focused one.

ROTA is supported by the national Winning the Race coalition of 37 BAME and other third sector organisations. The Director of Voice4Change England, Vandna Gohil, a key member of the Coalition said: "There also needs to be recognition of the role of BAME third sector organisations in promoting race equality, and sustained funding for them to effectively do this. Race Equality Impact Assessments have to remain as an important lever to measure processes as well as outcomes and not be just a tick box exercise."

Ends.

Race on the Agenda

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**PRESS RELEASE: RACE ON THE AGENDA
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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Notes to Editors

Race on the Agenda: www.rota.org.uk
Runnymede: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/>
Winning the Race Coalition: <http://www.rota.org.uk/pages/WTRC.aspx>
Voice4Change England: <http://www.voice4change-england.co.uk/>
Equality and Human Rights Commission: www.equalityhumanrights.com
Single Equality Bill: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09/equality.html>

To view the evidence session:
<http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=4186>

To read the evidence:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmpublic/equality/090602/pm/90602s01.htm>

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