



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01521

Name of petitioner

George Eckton and Jane O Donnell

Petition title

No More Page 3 in the Scottish Sun and Scottish Parliament

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the editorial team of the Sun and Scottish Sun to voluntarily remove the page 3 feature permanently.

Furthermore, until the Sun/Scottish Sun ceases its page 3 feature we request the Scottish Parliament no longer stock/sell The Sun or Scottish Sun newspaper given its objectification of women and gender stereotyping both seem at odds with the Scottish Parliament's equalities framework.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

The No More Page 3 campaign has attracted 187,000 signatures to an online petition at change.org over the last 12 months, over 50,000 in the last 2 weeks, seeking to request David Dinsmore, editor of the Sun Newspaper and by default Gordon Smart editor of the Scottish Sun, to take a mature editorial decision to remove the page 3 feature of a semi-naked women from his publication.

In a Scottish context a number of campaigners have contacted local councillors, MSPs, MPs and other civic institutions asking them to commit their support publicly through the signing of a standard letter, public expression of support or the signing of the online petition.

The issue of the No More Page 3 has been debated as part of a members motion led by Jackie Baillie MSP on 6 November 2013. The text of the S4M-07500 motion was:

That the Parliament notes with concern reports regarding a connection between the portrayal of sexualised images of women in the media and attitudes that reinforce sexist attitudes, sexual harassment, abuse and violence towards women; believes that this has been demonstrated by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the UK Government-commissioned Sexualisation of young people review; welcomes the No More Page 3 campaign, which calls on The Sun to refrain from printing pictures of topless women; applauds the campaign for what it considers a successful first year in operation; recognises that a motion in support of the campaign was agreed by the National Assembly of Wales and that numerous organisations, including UNISON, the British Youth Council, UK Girlguiding, the National Union of Teachers, the National Association of Head Teachers, and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers have also shown their support for the campaign, and notes calls in Dumbarton and across the country for The Sun in Scotland to stop

printing pictures of topless women.

Individual members of the No More Page 3 campaign have written and corresponded via social media with various members of the editorial team at the Scottish Sun on a number of related matters, including articulating concerns over the recent sexualisation of cancer awareness public health messages, but have yet to receive a response answering the wide range of concerns articulated and fundamental request for them to remove page 3.

We have corresponded with a number of organisations on this issue. For example:

Response to the recent Scottish Government consultation, which closed on 28 February 2014, on the forthcoming End Violence Against Women and Children Strategy: <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/76320413772/prioritising-prevention-evaw>

Letter to the Editor of the Scottish Sun on the specific recent editorial decision to sexualise cancer prevention on Tuesday's via the page 3 feature: <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/78678765846/sexualising-cancer-prevention-a-step-too-far>

And also general correspondence with the First Minister to raise awareness of the campaign: <http://nmp3.tumblr.com/post/74701321365/dear-first-minister-i-write-to-ask-you-to-support>

We have as a campaign received replies from Police Scotland: <http://nomorepage3.org/news/letter-from-a-deputy-chief-constable/>

And Scottish Government: <http://nomorepage3.org/news/letter-of-support-from-scottish-government/>

We would also request that until The Sun removes page 3 from its publication, that the Scottish Parliament ceases to purchase or stock with its premises the publication. This request we believe is in line with your current equalities framework: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/16483.aspx>

Petition background information

The campaign started in the summer 2012 when Lucy Holmes found she couldn't stop thinking about the fact that the largest female image in The Sun was of a young woman showing her breasts for men, even though Jessica Ennis had just won her gold Olympic medal. She wrote this letter to the then editor, Dominic Mohan.

"THE PAGE 3 IMAGE IS THERE FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THE SEXUAL GRATIFICATION OF MEN. SHE'S A SEX OBJECT. BUT WHEN FIGURES RANGE FROM 300,000 WOMEN BEING SEXUALLY ASSAULTED AND 60,000 RAPED EACH YEAR, TO 1 IN 4 WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED, IS IT WISE TO BE REPEATEDLY PERPETUATING A NOTION THAT WOMEN ARE SEXUAL OBJECTS?"

The Independent

Q. Why do you want to see an end to page 3?

A. There are a number of reasons why we think page 3 should go:

1. It is very sexist – The biggest picture of a woman in any paper most days is one of a very young woman in just her pants. In a newspaper this appears next to lots of pictures with news of men in suits or sports clothes doing things. The page 3 picture isn't about any news story and the model doesn't speak at all.

This picture is just inside the front cover of the biggest selling newspaper. The front pages are where all the most important news gets put. By putting a picture here of a woman in just her pants the newspaper is telling its readers that what is really most important about women is the way they look and their sexual allure. It doesn't care what they have to say, what their achievements or talents are.

In a country where we want men and women to be treated equally. Having pictures like this in our biggest selling papers makes it much more difficult for women to be taken seriously and when young boys or girls see this, what does it teach them about

women's place in society? Perhaps that men make the news through their actions whilst women stand around looking sexy.

2. Children can see Page 3 at any time - Lots of people take newspapers into public places and also into their family homes where they would be far less likely to take magazines containing similar images such as porn or lads mags.

When children watch TV we have a watershed so that we know that things shown after 9pm may contain sex, nudity and swearing. When we watch a movie with children there are certificates to help us decide if the content is appropriate. When buying newspapers there is no age at which you can't buy, whilst porn mags have to be placed on the top shelf. The page 3 pictures are therefore placed on bottom shelves next to other papers and children's comics etc. Not only this, but the Sun actively markets itself as a family newspaper. It advertises on children's television and includes holiday and toy promotions as well as features and competitions about boy bands etc.

Studies show that seeing these type of pictures is not good for children. We don't think there is anything wrong with children seeing nudity such as seeing parents or family naked or even people on the beach or in changing rooms for example. Images like page 3 are different. Children know what newspapers are and what they are for, they aren't expecting a sexual image. These pictures are sexual. The models are posed in a way to make the reader think they want to have sex with them and children can tell the difference. Young girls who see these pictures are more likely to grow up thinking they should get their clothes off for men. They are more likely to accept and take on the image of being a sex object.

Young boys who see these pictures are less likely to treat women and girls with respect. They are more likely to think of women and girls as less than human and as a result to treat women and girls in a derogatory way and not worry about hurting them.

3. It is sooooo... outdated! – The Daily Mirror used to feature topless Page Three girls in the 1970s. It dropped the feature in the 1980s because it realised that, culturally, the rest of Britain had moved on, and to keep on featuring bare breasts in a family newspaper would make it look like a dinosaur.

Page 3 comes from the 1970's. It mocks and disrespects women. The world and its moral perspective have moved on and we think it's time the Sun did the same and brought its readers with it.

Q. What right do you have to tell a commercial business how it should run? Surely if Sun readers were so disgusted by Page 3 they would stop buying it?

A. Well, the Human Rights Act allows us the right to free speech and peaceful protest, the people who support No More Page 3, are merely exercising that right.

All we are doing is asking The Sun to stop showing the bare breasts of young women in a family newspaper.

Perhaps another question could be 'what right did the Sun have in 1970 to start showing pictures of naked 16-year-old girls?' (it was only in 2003 that the models had to be 18).

We think a lot of people buy the Sun for lots of different reasons and many readers we have asked have said they would continue to buy it without page 3. The Sun is considered by many a light hearted easy read with good sports coverage. Perhaps it could use page 3 to showcase women's sport as at present that only makes up 5% of sports coverage over all.

In addition, the advanced unedited conclusions of the UN #CSW58 session from March 2014 still makes for sober reading for the more advanced nations in terms of gender equality.

<http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/58/CSW58-agreedconclusions-advanceduneditedversion.pdf>

You only need to turn to page 3 of the annual United Nations report on the status of women, it's even more depressing/challenging read than the Sun's page 3 in terms of gender equality and read the CSW view that despite progress with the advancement of

gender equality within and between all countries no country has achieved gender equality between men and women and page 3 is a continuing iconic representation of this inequality in Scotland.

In the context of the UN report and this petition the main relevant conclusion is:

- Recognize the important role the media can play in the elimination of gender stereotypes, and to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, increase the participation and access of women to all forms of media, and encourage the media to increase public awareness of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/nomorepage3>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

19 / 05 / 2014

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Please consider giving your support to a petition which seeks the Editorial Team to take a mature editorial decision to end the objectification of women most days in the Scottish Sun. To be clear we are not asking the Scottish Parliament to ban it!

It also asks Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee to write to the Editorial Team of the Sun and Scottish Sun to urge them to remove page 3,.

Furthermore, until the Sun/Scottish Sun ceases its page 3 feature we request the Scottish Parliament no longer stock/sell The Sun or Scottish Sun newspaper.