# Template letter to MPs on Policing Bill, December 2021

*Please adapt this letter to reflect your own experiences and concerns. All text in italics and red needs to be edited or replaced. If you have any queries, please contact* *politics@quaker.org.uk**.*

Dear <*insert your MP’s name here*> MP

I am concerned about the human rights implications of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. It goes against my Quaker values of equality, justice, peace and truth. I am particularly alarmed by the impact it could have on the right to protest and the right of Gypsy and Traveller communities to live a nomadic way of life.

**Right to protest**

*<This first section in red text is for you to recount your personal experience of protest. You may want to tell your MP about a time when you spoke out about something. It may be useful to include some/all of the following points as some MPs have limited/no experience of protest. Write as much or as little as you like>*

* *Describe the issue and any personal reasons for protesting*
* *Were you on your own, or did you go with others?*
* *Was it a gathering, or a march?*
* *Did you make/have placards? Did you deliver a petition?*
* *Did you make any noise, chant anything, or sing?*
* *Did you know many details in advance, or did you turn up and follow others?*
* *Did your protest help bring about change?*

Everyone agrees that ambulances and the emergency services must get where they need to go, including protestors. But there has been a concerted crackdown on protests for a number of years, which has left groups desperate for ways to air their cause. The answer is not more powers for the police as it is likely that these will have unintended consequences too, impacting on all manner of protests from climate activism to grieving families looking for justice; from those calling for the increased safety of women to those objecting to a European Super League.

**Gypsies and Travellers**

*<This first section in red text is for you to put in your own words>*

* ***Express your solidarity*** – criminalising trespass enacts a direct attack on the way of life for many people in the Gypsy and Traveller communities. You could say something like “This Bill poses a huge threat to nomadic existence and the cultural traditions of Gypsies and Travellers”. How we treat minority groups is the litmus test for our respect for equality and human rights.
* ***Highlight the failure of the planning system*** – it has failed to support the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities. There is a chronic lack of site provision. Gypsies and Travellers have been failed by central and local government who have not done enough to ensure there are sufficient sites and safe stopping places. Applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites are often rejected, confronted by long standing racial prejudices. The absence of allocated sites and stopping places leaves people with no place they are permitted to stop. It’s illogical to tell people where they can’t go, without telling them where they *can* go.
* ***Impact will be completely disproportionate***, including on families and children. Parents could go to prison and children could be made homeless when a primary residence is seized. You could talk about how everyone should have the right to a safe home. Ask your MP how they could support legislation which gives police the right to seize someone’s home and all their possessions.
* ***The police already have a range of eviction powers at their disposal***, and evictions can happen within an hour. Furthermore, many police officers do not support the proposals laid out in the legislation – a recent report analysing police responses to the Home Office consultation on encampments showed that 93.7% of police bodies called for site provision as the solution to encampments.

**My request**

As my MP, I would very much appreciate it if you would

*<Please choose the next line based on the party of the MP you are writing to>*

*<Conservative>* write to the Minister responsible for the Bill in the Lords (Baroness Williams of Trafford) and ask that the government make significant changes to this Bill.

*<Any other party>* support members of the House of Lords in voting against Part 3 and Part 4 of this Bill, and please vote in support of any amendments the Lords make to the Bill.

I look forward to hearing from you.

In Friendship

*Full name*

*Address (so they know you’re a constituent and can reply)*