Submission from Michele Pittendreigh for the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill

I see little merit in repeating in detail the concerns raised by the Law Society in its submissions relating to the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill which relate to the following areas:

1. Independence from Scottish Ministers
2. European Convention of Human Rights compliance.
3. Effect on small firms and those in rural areas with tight margins.
4. Access to justice issues, if solicitors decide not to carry out types of work which traditionally have given rise to complaints.

I share the Society's concerns and am concerned that the Bill, if enacted as it is presently drafted, will destroy the provision of legal services to poorer areas. There will be second-rate access to justice and there is a possibility that 'unlicensed' practitioners will not be subject to the proposed regime at any rate.

I urge you to consider the profession's concerns.