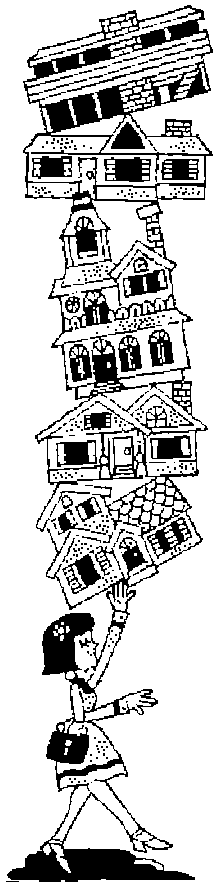


Submission to NI Bill of Human Rights

(first draft)

From: Loup Women's Group
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Moneymore
Co. Derry



Loup Women's Group is a vibrant group of women in a rural area of Northern Ireland. It provides a social outlet for women of all ages, as well as developing skills and offering information on a range of subjects.

With the assistance and support of The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, the members of this group have been learning about human rights and the proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Loup Women's Group would like to make the following observations and recommendations:

- Ø We feel that there is a need for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland which will take account of our singular circumstances and needs. We are in a post-conflict situation and this is an opportunity to ensure that common values and rights, rather than differences, are at the core of the Bill.
- Ø We would like this Bill to be couched in terms which will make it accessible to all.
- Ø We feel that such a bill must be able to be scrutinised and its implementation monitored.
- Ø It should be reviewed at least every five years for unintended consequences.
- Ø Its entitlements should be real and not merely aspirational; that is they are capable of being achieved in everyday life and enforceable within the law.
- Ø The government has an obligation to safeguard the rights of individuals and communities, enforcing the law where necessary.
- Ø As a women's group we feel that the rights of women, which will be enshrined in general terms in a Bill of Rights, may also need to be expanded and detailed in specific and relevant parts of a Bill.

Bearing in mind the above observations we in Loup Women's Group would like those involved in drawing up a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland to consider the following:

- Ø We think it is imperative, nay vital, that those engaged in agriculture in Northern Ireland have a right to remain on the land. We understand that customs in and attitudes to farming may be

different from ours on other parts of the United Kingdom. We feel that planning regulations should consider the needs of those living and working on farms and recognise their right to build and live on their own land.

- Ø There is, too, the right of farmers to a decent standard of living as a result of their labour on the land. A Bill of Rights, which should supplement and extend people's civil and political rights, must consider their economic, social and cultural rights. In a rural area those who work the land have the right to live in dignity and with adequate recompense for their labour.
- Ø The rights of rural women to become full working members of the economy must also be considered in a Bill of Rights. They may wish to become contributors to society and the economy by working in and from their homes. They may wish to work part-time or full-time outside the home. In either case they have a right to flexible working hours; opportunities to job share; accessible, affordable and appropriate public transport; adequate and appropriate child care.