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Pope has "missed the boat" on equal rights, say lawyers

The Pope has prompted immediate reactions among UK employment lawyers with his attack over the Equalities Bill. Clare Murray, Partner at CM Murray LLP said that his comments come too late; the battle is already lost.

"Protections for workers with religious views are already effectively trumped by those of female and gay workers who would be affected by their colleagues' religious views. That battle is already lost and the Catholic Church does itself no favours to suggest that the rules and laws of a religion should prevail over national laws protecting the basic equality rights of others. It will find itself in uncomfortable extremist company if it persists with that line.

"Whilst the Church still has some time to influence the debate on the draft Equality Bill, it has missed the boat completely on the existing equality laws protecting gay and female workers. These are now firmly established in the UK and are underpinned by European legislation."

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