

To the House of Commons.

The Petition of the Community Law Partnership on behalf of Gypsies and Travellers declares that the *Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill*, if brought into force, will have disastrous effects on the provision of advice and representation to Gypsies and Travellers on accommodation issues . Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the United Kingdom. The bill denies them access to the legal advice and assistance which is available to any other group . It is due to the failures of successive central and local Governments to ensure adequate site provision, that some 25% of the Gypsy and Traveller population who live in caravans are on unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments. This is through no fault of their own.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to ensure that Legal Aid in the *Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill* is available for Gypsies and Travellers to defend evictions from unauthorised encampments and to be advised and represented in County Court and High Court planning matters.

And the petitioners remain