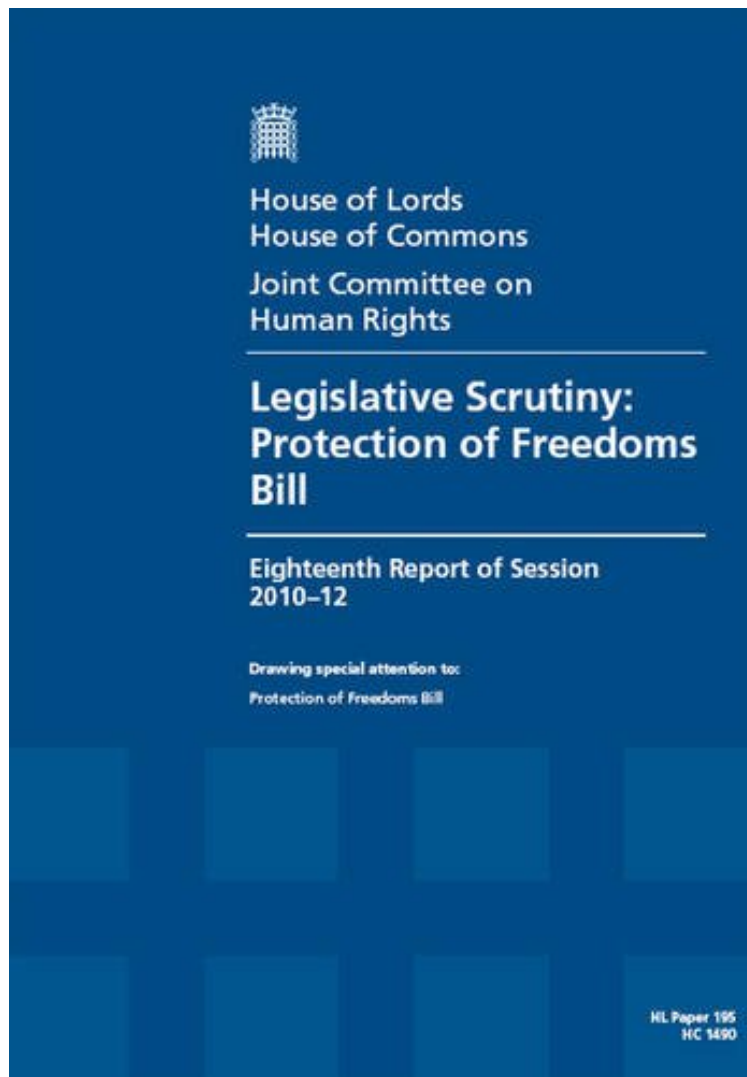


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This report welcomes the enhanced human rights protection which the Protection of Freedoms Bill (HC 189, ISBN 9780215558091) would provide, by proposing to repeal or reform measures which impinge on rights and freedoms. But this protection should be strengthened further in some areas. The Committee welcomes the Government's review of existing powers of entry to private properties, including homes, which has identified around 1200 statutory powers with associated powers of entry. But it is deeply concerned that the proposed breadth of proposals in the Bill could create new risks to individual rights by authorising the Government to extend existing powers of entry. The provisions relating to biometric material create a less intrusive mechanism for the retention of DNA and fingerprints. However, the Bill creates some unjustified risks to the individual right to privacy and the Government should provide further justification or amend the Bill significantly. There should be new safeguards in relation to the processing of children's biometric information. The Committee welcomes the proposal for a surveillance code to regulate the operation of CCTV by public authorities, and the permanent reduction in the maximum period of pre-charge detention of terrorist suspects to 14 days. However, it questions whether the need to provide for a contingency power to extend the period of pre-charge detention in the event of a future emergency is supported by the evidence. The Committee also supports changing the Public Order Act 1986 to remove all reference to public order offences based upon insulting words or behaviour.