**How would you characterise your views on the Bill in general?**

In support

It's about improving equality for all and allowing people who love each other to be able to celebrate their love like other people, if they choose to. It would bring Scotland to the forefront of equality and show the rest of the world that a famously traditional country can recognize when equality should be recognised.

**How would you characterise your views on the introduction of same sex marriage, so that same sex couples can marry each other?**

In support

I don't actually understand why this is being debated at all. We live in a time where discrimination against anyone for their gender, sexuality, religion, race or disability is unacceptable. to say that some people have a right to marriage and others do not is discriminatory, and should be left to each individual's choice, not law to decide how they celebrate their relationship. I also support the fact that the bill recognises that same sex intercourse outside of marriage is adultery, not currently enshrined in law, and therefore recognises infidelity in it's many forms as grounds for divorce. It seems preposterous to me that this was not all ready accepted as such.

**How would you characterise your views on putting belief celebrants on the same footing as religious celebrants?**

In support

Humanist celebrants in Scotland can already conduct legally-recognised marriages. The bill clarifies that in the law, and makes clear that other philosophical belief organisations can also apply to conduct marriages. I welcome this

**How would you characterise your views on the arrangements for authorising celebrants to solemnise opposite sex and same sex marriage (including the opt-in procedures)?**

In support

Many religions and religious factions have strong beliefs about homosexuality and it would be unfair to expect all places of worship to welcome same-sex marriage. However, there are also a number of religious settings where homosexuality is accepted as well as many LGBT individuals who have personal beliefs and it would be especially meaningful for them to be able to get married in a place of worship according to their religion. The opt in procedure is appropriate for this and I would welcome it. We think that a small amendment is needed to section 11(2) of the bill, in order to give those religious and belief bodies that want to, the option of using the gender-free form of the marriage ceremony, in section 11(2)(g), for mixed-sex
couples who would prefer that form. This is particularly important for mixed-sex couples where one or both is transgender or intersex. Religious bodies that wish to always use the “husband and wife” gendered form of the marriage ceremony should be free to continue to do so.

**How would you characterise your views on civil partnerships changing to marriages?**

In support

Many couples who have a Civil Partnership did so as it was the closest they were able to get to a legal marriage at the time. Most people I know consider the arrangement to be legally the same anyway and for those that have a Civil Partnership and want it to be recognised as a marriage, they should be able to sort this as soon as is practically possible.

**How would you characterise your views on allowing civil marriage ceremonies to take place anywhere, other than religious premises, agreed between the couple and registrar?**

In support

This should be available to all couples pursuing a marriage in general, whether LGBT or not. Still, for clarity's sake I am in favour of this regardless.

**How would you characterise your views on allowing the religious and belief registration of civil partnerships?**

In support

If the individuals getting married should want a religious service, and can find an appropriate religious practitioner and site to do so it should certainly be allowed. There will be many religious factions and congregations who are not open to allowing same-sex marriages in their places of worship due to their religious beliefs. If this is the case, they should have every right to deny marriage in their settings.

**How would you characterise your views on allowing transgender persons to stay married when obtaining a full Gender Recognition Certificate, which provides legal recognition in the acquired gender?**

In support

If they are living as a different gender and their partner accepts them as such, this should be allowed. If this bill goes through then this process would be a lot easier as it wouldn't matter if the couple was "traditional" or same sex.

**Would you like to comment on the wider issue of protections for those in society who may have concerns about same sex marriage?**

The proposed bill provides a good balance between accepting equality for all as well as respecting the religious rights of others who may disapprove on religious grounds. Those who do appose same-sex union have to accept that there are many
"traditional marriage" couples who live their lives outside of their religious ethics and they should consider this to be like that. They don't have to like it, but they do have to accept the right of others to have a loving relationship.

Would you like to comment on the wider issue of freedom of speech?

Would you like to comment on any other wider issues in relation to the Bill that are not mentioned above?

Are you responding as...

a private individual

Sally Baker
22 August 2013