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

In support

I strongly support and welcome the bill. It is a huge step towards equality for a nation which prides itself on equality and fairness. Religious freedom is thoroughly protected which removes any legitimate opposition to the bill. However some improvements could still be made as outlined in later questions.

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 fully support equal marriage. I find it genuinely baffling how people living in a country which promotes freedom and equality can even begin to try and justify structural inequality. LGBT citizens are full citizens and should therefore be afforded the s

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. This is extremely positive as it ensur

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

We agree that religious and belief organisations should be free to decide for themselves whether to solemnise only mixed-sex marriages, or same-sex marriages as well. Some religious bodies want to conduct same-sex marriages, including the Quakers, Unitari

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

In support

I think this is extremely important as it allows those who were previously subject to discrimination to enjoy full equality under the law and many people in civil
Partnerships have been found to be keen to change this to marriage (please find this information on the equality network website if more details are needed). The bill provides both those ways of changing a civil partnership to a marriage, which we welcome. However, in the bill, couples who are already in a civil partnership can only marry in Scotland if their civil partnership was registered in Scotland. Clearly the lightweight administrative procedure for changing to a marriage can only work with civil partnerships registered here in Scotland, but we see no reason why couples in a civil partnership registered elsewhere should not be allowed to marry in Scotland in the usual way. Not allowing this would cause real problems for couples who registered a civil partnership abroad and then moved to Scotland. They will be unable to change to a marriage unless they first dissolve their civil partnership. But that requires proving that the civil partnership has irretrievably broken down, by living apart for a year. It is very unfair to ask civil partners to do that in order to marry. Even if they return to the country where they registered their civil partnership, if that country does not allow same-sex marriage, they would need to dissolve their civil partnership there in a similar way before coming back to Scotland to marry. The practical result will be that the couple will effectively be barred from marrying. In contrast, same-sex couples from any part of the world who are not in a civil partnership will be allowed come to Scotland to marry, whether or not that marriage would be recognised in their home country. We see no reason why this should not also apply to couples who are already in a civil partnership, and we believe that the bill should be amended to allow this.

**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 is not specifically an issue for LGBT people, but the additional flexibility that will be allowed in choosing the location of civil marriage ceremonies is welcome. Frankly, this should not be an issue in this day and age. Couples should be allowed...

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

In support

From a personal standpoint I think it is problematic to maintain separation of "civil partnership" and "marriage". I think this creates a divide where by one type of relationship or commitment can be deemed different or better than another and it would be...

**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

I strongly believe that transgender people who are married should be able to obtain gender recognition without being required by the state to divorce. Not allowing this
would be a clear case of discrimination. And forcing people to divorce to remarry would

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

The bill strikes a good balance, and provides good protections for people with concerns about same-sex marriage. No religious organisation will be required to conduct same-sex marriages unless the organisation agrees to. Even where an organisation does agree, individual marriage celebrants within that organisation will be free to opt-out of same-sex marriages, as will any person who plays a part in the religious marriage ceremonies of that organisation (eg the church organist). These are strong protections. It has been proposed by some people that the bill should give civil registrars a statutory right to opt out of conducting same-sex marriages. We would strongly oppose that. Unlike religious celebrants, civil registrars are carrying out a civil function on behalf of the state, and therefore an opt-out on grounds of their personal religious belief is not appropriate. It would set a dangerous precedent that public service providers (in local government, NHS, etc) should have a legal right to pick and choose who they serve. This is no more acceptable on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity than it would be on other grounds such as race. Discrimination at a state level (or any level really but unfortunately people do have the right to behave like idiots if they so choose) is completely unacceptable and should not be institutionalised. It has also been proposed by some people that teachers should have the right to opt out of mentioning same-sex marriage if a pupil asks about it or it comes up in class, and that parents should be able to remove their children from any class where same-sex marriage might be mentioned. We would strongly oppose this. Teachers are there to teach the facts, not their personal views, and should answer questions factually. No teacher will be required to say that they personally agree with same-sex marriage, but all teachers must treat all pupils with respect, whatever their family arrangements, including pupils with same-sex married parents. It would be unworkable to allow opt-outs from lessons where same-sex marriage is mentioned. Opt-outs are not available from lessons where divorce is mentioned, which is equally controversial for some people. I feel that pandering to such beliefs creates a dangerous precedent. School as mentioned is about facts and learning. It is a fact that same sex couples exist and it is important we teach about this fairly. Ignorance is a key cause of discrimination and should not be encouraged. Furthermore this could be extremely damaging to children in the class who are LGBT who are then given the impression that they are somehow less than or to be avoided.

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

The bill will have no negative effect on freedom of speech, as section 14 of the bill confirms. People will remain free to disagree with same-sex marriage and to express that disagreement publicly. However as with any freedom of speech, hate speech can no

**Would you like to comment on any other wider issues in relation to the Bill that are not mentioned above?**
The bill is a huge step forward for equality, but it does not introduce full equal marriage. Apart from the issues mentioned under questions 7, 8 and 11 above, I note that the regulation of private sector pension schemes is reserved to Westminster, and th

**Are you responding as...**

- an academic
- a private individual

Danielle Eadie
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