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

In opposition

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

In opposition

Same sex marriage is undesirable. It gives no new rights to same sex couples, other than to call their relationship a marriage. However it will cause problems to the millions of people who consider marriage should only be between a man and a woman. These include people who hold such views for religious reasons as is the case for Christians and Muslims taking the traditional view as expressed in their scriptures. Such views are not going to go away. The numbers of such people far exceed the numbers of gay people who wish to be married. Everyone can live with the present system of Civil Partnerships. I know no one who objects to them. However I know many people who oppose gay marriage.

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

Neither

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)?

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

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?

Neither

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

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

As a parent, I think parents should have a right to withdraw primary school children about lessons on marriage after the law is changed. They should also have a right to limit the books and other material that their children see. Teachers with conscientious objection should not be required to teach about gay marriage. As a Civil Servant I am concerned that holding traditional views on marriage will be a barrier to recruitment or promotion in the public service. It has been reported in the press that this has already occurred in some cases. As a trustee of a church I am concerned that charitable status should not be at risk for charities supporting the traditional view of marriage. The legislation should be amended to give freedom of conscience to individuals in employment and groups who are not in agreement with same sex marriage. This would be similar to the protection in the abortion legislation. I am also concerned that court cases under equality legislation may force churches and mosques against their will to either conduct same sex marriage or cease doing all marriages. I am concerned that holding the traditional view of marriage should not become a barrier to fostering or adopting children.

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

Freedom of speech will be at risk because people expressing opinions against same sex marriage may be at risk, or think themselves at risk, of prosecution under equality or anti hate legislation.

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

M.Hadfield
22 August 2013