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

In support

I strongly support passage of legislation in Scotland for equal marriage regardless of the genders of those wishing to marry. This seems an obvious issue of fairness, or removing a discrimination. I applaud the faith bodies who have accepted the principal of equality of love and commitment; these are issues of the head and heart, not anatomy. I would also add that as someone who had a humanist wedding three years ago, their inclusion as celebrants of weddings is an extraordinary and wonderful thing that should be treasured and maintained. I would like to see civil partnership expanded to mixed gender couples. The word marriage carries too much baggage for some people to be happy with it and I can see why that might be. To summarise: Please vote in favour of same-sex marriage, and support considered steps to allow mixed-sex civil partnership in Scotland. Please support the clauses in the proposed bill that make marriage gender blind where gender reassignment takes place within a couple who wish to stay committed. But also don't allow the correct requirement for the other spouse to signal this agreement or not as a way for gender reassignment to be blocked or delayed. Thank you

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

In support

This seems an obvious issue of fairness, or removing a discrimination.

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

In support

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

Strongly in favour so long as they meet the requirements. I am concerned that it may be difficult to get to that status if they do not already hold it but I think the Humanist option works for most people.

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

In support
If that is what the partners wish, not mandatory.

**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

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

In opposition

If the organisation supports it I guess why not? But then what is the difference between the two? On balance, I think keep civil partnership for civil ceremonies and possibly non-religious belief systems such as the Humanists.

**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 urge that the legislation allow willing partners to remain married if one partner obtains a gender recognition certificate that shows that they have changed their assigned gender to the gender that they identify with. At the same time, it should be made clear that the requirement for a spouse of someone undergoing gender reassignment cannot use the step of agreeing or not to remain married as a way of blocking the reassignment. There should be a limit on the time between requesting this agreement and receiving it.

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

I am sensitive to the objections of some of the faith bodies in Scotland to this legislation so it is important that no such body be required to carry out same sex weddings or any other wedding that contravenes their belief systems. That is an issue for their adherents and celebrants amongst themselves. They hold their beliefs sincerely but this cannot be used as a justification for preventing those who do not share their beliefs from enjoying a basic human freedom. They should accept that whilst their rights are protected, they cannot restrict those of others who do not share their beliefs. It has been said that if someone has a problem with same sex marriage, the solution is simple; don't marry someone of the same gender.

**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

Nick Honhold
17 July 2013