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

In opposition

This is introducing an absurdity in the law.

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

In opposition

Marriage requires a man and a woman. Nothing else will do. Unions between same sex couples will never be marriages whatever they call them. Legislators would do well to remember that you can can fool some of the people some of the time, you can fool some of the people all of the time but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

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

In opposition

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?

In opposition

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?
In support

Provided the individuals concerned had been properly married in the first place and both agreed to remain so after the change in circumstances.

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

Protection for individuals and organisations who oppose controversial legislation is difficult to frame in a watertight way with so many courts nowadays where these provisions can be challenged. Better not to have the controversial legislation in the first place.

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

Individuals have already been pilloried and persecuted for stating opposition to same sex marriage and the education aspects that come with it. This is even before the legislation is put in place. What will it be like afterwards? It used to be said in this country about freedom of speech "We might not agree with what you say but we will fight for your right to say it".

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

I am old enough to remember the second world war if not quite old enough to have taken part in it and I do remember the reasons given at the time for fighting it i.e. to preserve world freedom, freedom from fear, freedom of speech and freedom of religion. This proposed legislation would seem to go a long way to undermining all of these especially considering that it was not included in any party's manifesto before the last election.

**Are you responding as...**

a private individual

Mr.F.J.MacConnell
23 August 2013