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

In support

One Spirit Interfaith Foundation welcome the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill. We believe and assert that civil, religious and belief-based forms of marriage should be available to both same-sex and heterosexual couples. All people should be able to form a legal union in a ceremony that may be civil, religious or belief based. It is a fundamental right of individuals to make their vows in a context which is representative of their beliefs and traditions, whether those beliefs are religious, spiritual or secular. We are pleased that the draft Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill would enable those organisations and celebrants who wish to provide the service of a religious or belief-based marriage to same-sex couples to do so. Interfaith Ministers and Celebrants in Scotland are enthusiastic about the proposals set out in the draft Bill and would like to conduct same-sex religious or belief-based marriages.

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

In support

One Spirit Interfaith Foundation believe and assert that civil, religious and belief-based forms of marriage should be available to both same-sex and heterosexual couples. All people should be able to form a legal union in a ceremony that may be civil, religious or belief based. It is a fundamental right of individuals to make their vows in a context which is representative of their beliefs and traditions, whether those beliefs are religious, spiritual or secular. We are pleased that the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill would enable those organisations and celebrants who wish to provide the service of a religious or belief-based marriage to same-sex couples to do so.

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

In support

One Spirit Interfaith Foundation welcome this. Interfaith Celebrants offer services to people of all faiths or none, and are authorised by the Registrar general for Scotland to hold legal marriages. The number of marriages held by Interfaith Celebrants is

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
One Spirit Interfaith Foundation believe that it is a fundamental right of individuals to make their vows in a context which is representative of their beliefs and traditions, whether those beliefs are religious, spiritual or secular. Interfaith Ministers and Celebrants in Scotland would like to conduct same-sex religious or belief-based marriages. We agree with the opt-in procedure and are pleased that this would enable those organisations and individuals who do NOT wish to conduct same-sex marriage to make that choice.

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

Neither

We welcome the proposals to change civil partnership to marriage. Interfaith celebrants would be happy to do this as part of a full-scale marriage ceremony and celebration, or as a small, private event. However, the Bill makes this possible only for couples who have registered their civil partnership in Scotland. We would wish to see more discussion to enable couples who have had their civil partnership registered in other parts of the UK also included.

**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

We agree that this should be possible, although the experience of our celebrants would suggest that Register offices may, at times, find it difficult to offer the flexibility to meet the requests of a couple.

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

In support

One Spirit Interfaith Foundation welcome this. We would also welcome discussion on extending this option to same-sex couples.

**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?**

Neither

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

The One Spirit Interfaith Foundation is based upon the principle of equality. This is embodied in the Code of Ethics accepted by all ordained interfaith ministers: "We aim to keep our hearts and minds open to everyone, celebrating difference but not separation. We refuse to marginalise people on the basis of age, disability, state of health, race, gender, nationality, religion, sexuality, economic status or any other
distinction." We consider that the Bill contains sufficient protection for those who do not support same-sex marriage.

**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?**

One Spirit Interfaith Foundation welcome the proposals for further consultation regarding the tests that would be applied to organisations wishing to hold heterosexual marriage same-sex marriage and civil partnerships in Scotland and would seek to be involved in these discussions.

**Are you responding as...**

- a celebrant
- a faith/belief-based organisation

Jane Patmore
One Spirit Interfaith Foundation
23 August 2013