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

In support

The bill would promote equality for all L.G.B.T Citizens, and grant them the same rights which heterosexual couples have been enjoying for centuries.

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

In support

Allowing same-sex couples to marry would enhance equality and freedom within our society. Citizens of a truly equal democracy, which is meant to embody the ideal of freedom, should be able to express their partnership in an open, legal context before a legal system which is meant to be objective and unbiased, and hence not based on the ideals of a specific or a few religious groups.

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

In support

All beliefs, whether philosophical or religious, are all beliefs nonetheless. One should not have priority or a special significance over the other, especially in law.

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

I believe the freedom of those of religious groups should be protected. Those religious groups who wish to conduct same sex marriages should be allowed to opt in to do so, and those who do not wish to conduct it under no circumstances should have too.

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

In support

Many L.G.B.T citizens took part in civil partnerships because marriage at this time was not an option, although this does not speak to all L.G.B.T citizens. So, if desired, they should be able to change to marriage. However, civil partnerships should remain available, not just to same sex couples, but to opposite sex couples as well.
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

As long as all parties are willing, it should be allowed.

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

In support

As long as all parties are willing, it should be allowed.

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

A trans gender individual should be allowed to remain within their marriage when obtaining the gender recognition certificate, if they wish to do so. This is a domestic affair between two individuals, what place does legislation have in getting involved?

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

I appreciate, like many others who support this bill, that many religious bodies are apposed to it due to their religious beliefs, and we respect this. Under no circumstance should anyone be forced to conduct a same-sex marriage against their will and beliefs. This is because it would infringe on their freedom and rights. However, we would ask the same rights to be bestowed upon us. If two members of the same sex wish to get married, whether that be in a civil or religious ceremony (where the party is willing), they should be allowed to do so. It is not the governments and legal systems place to align itself with a particular belief system of society; it should be objective, impartial and unbiased in its approach to governing it's citizens. All that we ask is to be treated with the same equality as the rest of society, as long as it doesn't force others to conduct which that they do not want too. This does not seem unreasonable to ask. Some religious groups fear that bodies such as the European court of human rights could over rule a Scottish Law, and hence force religious groups to conduct these ceremonies. I think that these religious groups perhaps forget that same sex couples won't want to be married by someone who is against it, and so won't go to such hassle to force them to do so. On more official grounds, if the law could help protect these religious groups rights from other legislative bodies, to reassure them, it should be done. To conclude, I believe the bill promotes the core ideals of democracy; equality and freedom, and so I unwaveringly support it.
Would you like to comment on the wider issue of freedom of speech?

I believe that people should be allowed to say exactly what they want. To limit them is to limit their freedom. Of course, undoubtedly, hate and discrimination would arise from this, but I like to think that society is not completely lost, and that idle preaching of hate, with no logical reasoning behind it, would never be taken seriously. Some would say that hate should not allowed to be preached, and in general I would agree with this. But what is hateful is highly subjective. The sensitive individual would see disagreement as hate, the thick-skinned one would see a outburst of hate as a reasonable opinion. And so I would feel that defining what is hateful in law as extremely difficult.

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

I believe strongly that civil partnerships should remain available, and should be available to heterosexual couples too. This is all about equality at the end of the day.

Are you responding as...

an academic
an LGBT group
a private individual
A human being.

Blair Pinkett
14 August 2013