MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP (SCOTLAND) BILL
SUBMISSION FROM JULIE PRICE

How would you characterise your views on the Bill in general?
In support
This Bill is necessary in order for Scotland to truly be the equal, progressive country we say we are.

How would you characterise your views on the introduction of same sex marriage, so that same sex couples can marry each other?
In support
Same-sex couples should be afforded equality in the eyes of the law. There is no reason for this not to be the case and the law of Scotland should be changed to reflect this.

How would you characterise your views on putting belief celebrants on the same footing as religious celebrants?
In support
People should be allowed to celebrate their marriage in any way they deem fit, provided that those organisations asked to carry out the ceremony are 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
I believe that churches should be allowed to opt in to these laws. I don't think any organisation should be forced to marry anyone (same-sex or otherwise). With regards to those employed by local authorities, I do not think they should be allowed to opt-out on a matter of 'conscience'. They are publicly-funded employees and should represent all citizens.

How would you characterise your views on civil partnerships changing to marriages?
In support
I believe that those who opted for a civil partnership when a full marriage was not an available option should be given the option to change to a marriage if they so wish.

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

So long as the couple and the registrar are in agreement, I see no reason why this would be a problem. This would be the case for all civil marriages rather than just those of the same sex.

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

In support

I think choice is good. Couples deserve the ceremony that most closely fits with their beliefs. Some churches will not allow same-sex weddings; I think that if they are willing to offer a blessing to same-sex couples, this is progress and 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

I think that those transitioning gender should be allowed to stay married whilst doing so. This is not an overnight process, so if they are already married, they will be transitioning as such before the gain the Certificate.

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

I think there is very little that would constitute a legitimate concern. I believe in religious freedom, but that is a two-way process. For those who raise concerns re. schools/education; I grew up in a home with heterosexual parents, a heterosexual sibling; 18 heterosexual cousins and countless heterosexual friends and teachers. I was ONLY taught about heterosexual sex and relationships at school. Yet I am a lesbian. Education and understand is absolutely not "promotion". I think fear-mongers should be tackled rather than "reassured".

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

People can disagree with homosexuality, same-sex marriage and anything else they like as much as I can support it, campaign for it and hopefully engage in it myself one day. The issue for me is when people are given a platform to air comments that are difficult to describe as anything but homophobic and to justify it through "freedom of speech". Sexual orientation and gender realignment are both legally protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and should be treated as such.

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

I applaud the Scottish Government for bringing this Bill forward and for taking every day individual citizens like myself one step forward towards being equal in both the
eyes of the law and of society. This Bill is timely and necessary and I look forward to celebrating its passing and to celebrating the love and marriage of so many of my friends who just happen to be LGBT. I look forward even more to the day when this isn't an issue any more; but to get there in the future we have to be here now, so thank you.

Are you responding as...

a private individual

Julie Price
23 August 2013