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

In support

The Bill is long overdue but it's heartening nonetheless to see real progress being made. LGBT people in Scotland are still institutionally and socially discriminated against and this Bill will do a great deal to further equality across Scotland, though there remains a great deal still to do.

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

In support

Given that marriage is not intrinsically religious - the institution pre-dates the three "main" religions of Scotland (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam), and that there is no established church in Scotland (C of S is national, but not established), the religious opposition to same sex marriage is only reasonable in so far as denying members of any particular religion the right to marry a person of the same sex/gender. Other than religious objection, the only opposition to same sex marriage seems to be logically reducible to hetero/cis -sexism - at worst, trans/homo -phobia - and that is not the right basis upon which to legislate. Allowing the majority to control rights matters relating to the minority is not - and this has been proven countless times throughout history - a good idea.

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

In support

I can't think of any reason to further privilege religious celebrants in Scotland. Belief celebrants should absolutely be on equal footing

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 think it should be opt-out. Obviously there is a fine line for this legislation to tread between respecting the rights of the LGBT community and respecting the rights of the religious community, but at what point do we invoke the harm principle?

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

In support
This should be a choice for the Civil Partners in question - it should be an individual, case-by-case, decision for those who want to be married and those who wish to remain CPed.

**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

I cannot fathom a single reason why the two people marrying one another, and whoever is performing their marriage, should not be allowed to choose the location of their own wedding. There are more than enough other laws which would prevent weddings taking place in ridiculous or dangerous places.

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

In support

Yes, they should be, it's ridiculous that they might not be, what sort of half-cocked equality would you end up with if you kept drawing distinctions between CPs and marriages?

**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

This choice MUST be entirely, autonomously, the choice of the individual who is transitioning. Not their spouse, not their doctor, not the state, and not their parish. The transgender person is the only person who matters in this decision.

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

Having completed an in depth analysis of same sex marriage in Scotland, and its treatment by the media over summer 2012, I would say that anyone with genuine concerns over same sex marriage could be persuaded out of such concerns were they educated about it. Chiefly moral and religious arguments have been used against same sex marriage and it is clear that while protecting religious freedoms is one of the most important things a state can do, it is never reasonable for any religion or religious individual to force their beliefs and ways of life onto other groups. Moral opposition to same sex marriage is rooted almost entirely in heterosexist and cissexist beliefs and attitudes. Protecting discrimination is not the point of legislations to protect freedom of speech, expression, religion, etc. We need only look toward the current climate in Russia to see how damaging such discriminatory and marginalising beliefs can be. This is the opportunity for Scotland to go further than has Westminster's legislation, to create a more equal society for all.
Would you like to comment on the wider issue of freedom of speech?

JSM'S HARM PRINCIPLE NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS. Freedom of speech does not extend to hate speech. LGBT identities and orientations are not choices. It is not fair that leaders of the Catholic Church can openly call homosexuals paedophiles, beastealists, and/or 'abominations' when the Catholic Church are protected from equivalent offensive bile directed at them.

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

It's time to clamp down on homophobia, not homosexuality.

Are you responding as...

an academic
a private individual
a citizen who wants to marry her daughter's other mother.

Gillian Reoch
14 August 2013