Redefining marriage is unnecessary and a distraction from matters which are of importance to the people of Scotland, such as the economy and health.

It is not clear what new legal rights, if any, same-sex couples would receive which they do not already have through civil partnerships.

Marriage predates law, nation and church. Since God is its author, it is way beyond the pay grade of any civil leader or politician to alter its fundamental character as an institution of nature for the mutual support of spouses and the begetting and nurturing of children. Although matrimonial law has been tweaked over the years, the law has never fundamentally altered the essential nature of marriage: a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman. The plan to redefine marriage is therefore radical and unprecedented. The state will next try to redefine what a man or a woman is, but again that is way beyond its pay grade. Neither Church nor state nor any human institution can alter these givens of creation.

Same-sex marriage focuses on the rights of adults. But marriage, as it has been understood throughout history, has been about much more than the love between two people. As an institution it incentivises a man and woman to not only commit to one another but to any children their union may create.

Once you start unpicking one aspect of the definition of marriage, it can unravel further. In Canada and in some US states, where marriage has been redefined, attempts have been made to legalise polygamy. In Brazil, a three-way relationship was given marriage-like recognition, and the same is true of the Netherlands.

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