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

In support

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance supports the Bill as a step towards further equality in Scotland.

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

In support

We believe that the law should treat all marriages as equal and welcomes the Bill as an effort to achieve this.

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

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

The SIAA agrees with the proposals for authorising religious and belief celebrants to solemnise same-sex marriages in civil, religious and belief ceremonies. We believe that religious and belief bodies should be allowed, but not required, to conduct same-sex marriages. While we recognise that unlike religious celebrants, civil registrars are carrying out a civil function on behalf of the state, we agree in principal with the opt-in process which will allow civil, religious and belief bodies to conduct same-sex marriages if they so choose. We feel that this process will protect and support freedom of religion and belief. We also support the proposed amendment to the Equality Act 2010 which makes clear that in opting out neither the individual religious or belief celebrant, nor the religious body, breach equality law.

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

In support

Both marriage and civil partnership should be open to all couples and civil partnerships should be able, but not required, to be changed into marriage. The SIAA welcomes the proposed legislation as a significant move forwards, but would like the process for changing a civil partnership into a marriage to be a simpler one. We believe that a civil partnership should be able to be changed into a marriage
regardless of where it has been registered and that same-sex couples who are non-residents should be able to come to Scotland to get married, including those who are already in civil partnerships.

**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

The SIAA agree that same-sex and opposite-sex marriages should be allowed to take place anywhere agreed by the couple and the registrar. This should also include religious premises if the religious premises are willing to host them.

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

**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

We fully support the Scottish Government’s plans to revise the gender recognition process so that people who are married or in a civil partnership can obtain full gender recognition without needing to divorce or dissolve their civil partnership. Again, we feel that the process should be simplified and disagree with the requirement for a second marriage ceremony. This should be consistent for all applicants who are married or in a civil partnership regardless of being registered within or outwith Scotland.

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

The SIAA believe that LGBT people are not being equally considered by the proposals in relation to education. Education should be inclusive, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or family situation and should promote equality, diversity and actively discourage discrimination. As such, the SIAA would welcome the revision of sexual education in schools to recognise and include all different types of relationships, including same-sex.

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

SIAA believes that everyone has the right to free speech and that this should be protected. Through the measures detailed in the consultation we believe it will effectively protect freedom of speech. We feel that the Bill will have no negative effect on freedom of speech and that people will remain free to continue to voice their views publicly however also believe that vocally discriminating against LGBT people does not contribute to a society where people are equal and valued.
Would you like to comment on any other wider issues in relation to the Bill that are not mentioned above?

Are you responding as...

another representative body

Shaben Begum
Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
22 August 2013