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

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

How would you characterise your views on putting belief celebrants on the same footing as religious celebrants?
Neither

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

A small amendment is needed to section 11(2) of the bill in order to give the option of using the gender-free form of the marriage ceremony, in section 11(2)(g) for mixed-sex couples. This is particularly important for mixed-sex couples where one or both is transgender or intersex. Religious bodies that wish to always use the “husband and wife” gendered form of the marriage ceremony should be free to continue to do so.

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

The bill should be amended to allow couples in a civil partnership registered outside Scotland to marry without first having to dissolve their civil partnership.

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?
Neither

How would you characterise your views on allowing the religious and belief registration of civil partnerships?
Neither
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

Spousal consent should not be required for the granting of gender recognition, but should instead be required for the subsequent re-registration of the marriage and the issue of a new marriage certificate. Provision for simpler medical evidence requirements in the case of long-term transitioned people (transitioned for at least six years) should be added to the bill. The minimum age for applying for gender recognition should be brought into line with the minimum age for marrying in Scotland, that is, 16.

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

Civil registrars are carrying out a civil function on behalf of the state, and therefore an opt-out on grounds of their personal religious belief is not appropriate. It would set a dangerous precedent that public service providers (in local government, NHS, etc) should have a legal right to pick and choose who they serve. Teachers are there to teach the facts, not their personal views, and should answer questions factually. Whilst no teachers should be required to say that they personally agree with same-sex marriage, they must treat all pupils with respect, whatever their family arrangements, including pupils with same-sex married parents. Opt-outs are not available from lessons where divorce is mentioned, which is equally controversial for some people.

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

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

There should be legislation to open up civil partnership in Scotland to couples regardless of their gender. This will make it possible for a person in a civil partnership to get gender recognition without the need to change their civil partnership to a marriage.

Are you responding as...

a private individual

Alison M. Shields
18 August 2013