



The Scottish Parliament Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Parliamentary Year 3, No. 108, Session 5

Meeting of the Parliament

Thursday 9 May 2019

Note: (DT) signifies a decision taken at Decision Time.

The meeting opened at 11.40 am.

1. General Questions: Questions were answered by Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

2. First Minister's Questions: Questions were answered by the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon).

3. Changes to Pension Credit Could Cost Mixed-age Couples £7,320 Annually: The Parliament debated S5M-15570 in the name of Kenneth Gibson—That the Parliament condemns the UK Government's decision that, from 15 May 2019, newly-retired people whose partners are younger than the state retirement age of 65 will no longer be able to claim pension credit (PC) and must instead claim universal credit (UC) along with their partners; understands that the couple rate of UC is £114.81 a week, compared with £255.25 for a couple receiving PC, which amounts to a potential loss of £7,320 a year; believes that this change could have a devastating impact on couple's finances, health and wellbeing and increase the number of older people in poverty; considers that, if the change comes into force, couples might find themselves in the position of being financially better off if they split up and live apart; is disappointed that the changes were set out in a written statement by Parliamentary Secretary for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Guy Opperman MP, which was published online on the evening of 14 January 2019; believes that this allowed the announcement to go through largely unnoticed due to the Brexit vote, and notes the calls for the UK Government to reconsider this decision, which, it believes, could drive many older people and their partners in Cunninghame North, Scotland and across the UK into poverty.

4. Motion without Notice: Kenneth Gibson moved without notice that, under Rule 8.14.3, the debate be extended by up to 30 minutes. The motion was agreed to.

5. Ministerial Statement: Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Jeane Freeman) made a statement and answered questions on the Scottish Government's Response to the Sturrock Review.

6. Portfolio Questions: Questions on Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform were answered by a Cabinet Secretary.

7. Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill – Stage 3: Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, moved S5M-17219—That the Parliament agrees that, during stage 3 of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill, debate on groups of amendments shall, subject to Rule 9.8.4A, be brought to a conclusion by the time limit indicated, that time limit being calculated from when the stage begins and excluding any periods when other business is under consideration or when a meeting of the Parliament is suspended (other than a suspension following the first division in the stage being called) or otherwise not in progress:

Groups 1 to 3: 40 minutes

The motion was agreed to.

8. Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill – Stage 3: The Bill was considered at Stage 3.

The following amendments were agreed to (without division): 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 1.

Amendment 7 was disagreed to (by division: For 29, Against 82, Abstentions 0).

The Presiding Officer determined, under Rule 9.8.5BA that, in his view, no provision of the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill related to a protected subject-matter.

9. Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill – Stage 3: Minister for Community Safety (Ash Denham) moved S5M-17210—That the Parliament agrees that the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Bill be passed.

The motion was agreed to ((DT) by division: For 112, Against 0, Abstentions 0).

10. Decision Time: The Parliament took a decision on item 9 as noted above.

The meeting closed at 5.03 pm.

P E Grice
Clerk of the Parliament
9 May 2019

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