

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM ANNE-MARIE BOYLE

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

In opposition

I believe the bill has been ill-conceived and, despite warnings from a variety of experts and professionals, little thought has been given to the effects it may have on many aspects of people's lives.

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

In opposition

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

In opposition

I have seen no specific definition of 'belief celebrant'; however, many Religious Celebrants have strong beliefs regarding marriage and this bill puts them in an untenable position. It may be that some belief celebrants are similarly affected, however, in my opinion, this question is simply leading to this government compelling Religious Celebrants to act against their conscience or fall foul of the law.

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 opposition

The arrangements have failed to recognise that many Celebrants will, as a result of this bill, be put in the position where they are unable to express their beliefs without falling foul of discrimination legislation.

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

In opposition

Can this government explain what benefits a so-called 'same-sex marriage' will provide to a couple which has already entered into a 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?

In opposition

While this matter is not of any great relevance, as far as I can see, I would repeat that I am not in favour of a government taking it upon itself to redefine marriage and so am 'in opposition' of the question. I understand that Registrars will have no right to exercise their conscience once this government has passed its bill and I find it deeply troubling that some people in this country are now to face discrimination for holding a view contrary to that of the government.

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

In opposition

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 opposition

It would appear paradoxical for someone to remain married in these circumstances. This defies common sense; sadly, common sense does not appear to figure in any of this.

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

From published material by legal experts and from recent case law, it would appear that there is (or will be) no protection whatsoever from penalty as well as discrimination and persecution for people who dare to disagree with this government and the minority lobby which has dragged this country to the point where, despite all the economic and social problems resulting from recession requiring finance, vast amounts of parliamentary time and tax-payers' money is being spent on a piece of legislation which will benefit very few people but will criminalise many ordinary and decent people who never voted for a party which included this in its manifesto and yet will find themselves alienated and in breach of legislation which is flawed and unfair. No good legislation should create an atmosphere where the rights of one group come at the expense of those of another. Forcing Churches which, because of their faith cannot countenance same-sex 'marriage' to fall foul of the law, seems a brutal way to alter society, while the irony of doing so in the name of discrimination and inclusivity is typical of this government.

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

This government is well on its way already to repressing freedom of speech and thought for anyone who disagrees with its agenda. There is no obvious protection for Religious Celebrants, other Religious people, teachers and even parents who dare to express an opinion contrary to the ethos behind the bill.

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

As far as the bill is concerned, the so-called 'protections' this government is putting in place are limited in their scope, as well as unsustainable in the face of European

Human Rights' legislation according to eminent Human Rights' lawyers. I must also express my distaste at the way this government invites comment from voters on this matter with scarcely-veiled threats about how opinions may be used.

Are you responding as...

a private individual

Anne-Marie Boyle
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