

CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

CENSUS (AMENDMENT) (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUPPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE FROM MATHEW WILKIE

I have recently become aware of the evidence given to the parliament regarding the Census (amendment) (Scotland) Bill. I am a Scottish resident and a trans person, and I wish to comment on a number of the points brought forward - in particular:

- That guidance should be changed to require trans people to answer with "biological sex at birth" or "legal sex" rather than their "lived sex" as it currently is.

It is important for me to say that I fully support the Bills initial proposals:

"The Bill aims to ensure that when questions are added to the census on prescribed aspects of gender identity, and on sexual orientation, answering them will be voluntary.

It is proposed that the prescribed aspect for gender identity will be trans status/history, and that this would be asked following a non-binary sex question, eg, male, female or other. The most recently tested questions were:

- What is your sex? Female, Male, Other, please write in
- Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history? Yes, No, Prefer not to say"

This change would be useful to both me and census data as I am a man (male) who is trans and therefore I would be able to provide most accurate data about myself. It would also help to aid Scotland's position in world rankings on human rights and equality for trans people. It is vital that we can be counted as part of the population of Scotland in order for our human rights to be upheld in the future. The current guidelines allowing binary trans people - male and female people - to accurately complete the census in their lived gender is along the right lines, but it excludes the percentage of the population whose gender is non-binary and who, by the exclusion, are at risk of erasure in future progression of equality in Scotland.

Adding "Other, please write in" to bring the census question in line with best practice ensures non-binary people will not be forgotten in Scotland's future.

With regards to the points brought forward within the given evidence. I live and work as a man within society. At my place of work and education I am fully seen as a man, and all services I interact with regard me as a man. My needs within society are that of a man. In all circumstances in which I am asked my sex I respond "male". If I were required to answer the census question on sex with the sex I was assigned at birth or the legal sex on my birth certificate would have to infer I was "female", which is incorrect both as who I exist as in society and biologically, due to steps I have taken to transition to male personally and within society. The data I, and other trans

people, would be forced to present to the census would be practically incorrect. This would therefore provide incorrect data to service providers who use census data in funding and service development.

Not only that, but my identity as a man would be erased and ignored by the Scottish government, akin to countries in which legal transition is not recognised or accepted. This would bring the perception of Scottish policy in line with countries in which there is no legal recognition or human rights protections for transgender people - a severe step backwards in equality for Scotland. I am proud to live in Scotland - a place which allows me to get on with my life like any other non-trans person would be able to. Taking any steps to remove my ability to interact in society as all other people in Scotland do would impact my well being in a negative manner.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns on this matter.