



Government Equalities Office

Government Equalities Office
4th Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

www.gov.uk/geo

Dr James B Waddell
waddelljb@christiandoctrine.com

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Dear Dr Waddell,

Thank you for your email of 13 May to Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister for Women and Equalities and Family Justice, about her voting record and marriage of same-sex couples. I have been asked to reply on the Minister's behalf.

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to write to set out your concerns. As you will be aware, the debate about marriage of same-sex couples was one about which many MPs received a great deal of representations from their constituents and which they will each have considered carefully before voting on the legislation. The Minister received correspondence requesting her to vote against the Bill at a ratio of 100:1 in comparison to those in favour. She therefore made the difficult decision to vote against the Bill, and represent the views of many of her constituents. As you know, the Bill was passed by Parliament and is now law, and the Minister fully supports this.

The Government is fully aware of the concern over the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 by some faith groups. This is why the legislation protects and promotes religious freedom by ensuring that religious organisations which wish to marry same sex couples according to their rites can opt in to do so, while protecting from successful legal challenge those religious organisations and their representatives who do not wish to conduct marriages of same sex couples. The Act contains a 'quadruple lock' of measures to ensure that those rights are protected.

Let me reassure you that the Government fully supports equality, not only for LGB&T groups but also for religious belief. The UK has a strong track record of tackling



inequalities and remains committed to doing so.

Please be assured that the Minister is absolutely committed to tackling discrimination in all its forms and to creating a fairer society for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Kennedy
Government Equalities Office

E: enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk