

Submission re the Adoption Of Children Legislation Amendment (Equality) Bill

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed piece of legislation.

This Bill is misnamed. There is not about equality because the Bill discriminates against the child to be adopted.

Every child should, where possible, have a mother and father. That is the natural thing, which although it doesn't always work out, is still the way it should be. We are biologically made of man and women and from there a mother and a father and a grandfather and a grandmother etc. Our human heritage is very important to our identity. Nature has taught us something over many thousands of years and that is recognised in many cultures and religions. Nature teaches us the right balance – the yin and yang – opposite forces combining. We are naturally that way but this legislation tries to avoid the lessons of nature. This legislation takes away the right of a child to have only a mother and a father when adopted. It places no emphasis on the importance of the rights of a child. It avoids any discussion on mother and father but dismisses those terms as archaic and replaces them with a redefined definition of the term parent. This of course is done to allow for same sex couples to adopt children. Same sex couples may well be able to raise children with love but love is not just the prerogative of same sex couples. Same sex couples, as nature shows, cannot be mother and father because by nature they cannot reproduce. Are children becoming a commodity you can now order rather than something that has its origin in something much deeper based on a natural human process. The adoption of a child is part of that process and it reinforces the natural cycle. Same sex relationships may be loving but they are not the yin and yang, they are not complimentary like a mother and father and they do not match nature, a biological fact. Having a mother and father, adopted or not, is a right that should be protected and it is not protected by this legislation.

UN Rights of a Child

Article 7 (Registration, name, nationality, care): All children have the right to a legally registered name, officially recognised by the government. Children have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country). **Children also have the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.**

Parent by any meaning of the word means mother and father. To allow same sex couples to adopt children, the Government proposes to change the conventional meaning of the word parent to exclude just mother and father. This is how the legislation proposed gets around the Rights of the Child Convention.

It presumes that only a gender neutral parent is part of the discussion.

The legislation also makes no allowance for the rights of the parents who may offer a child for adoption. What happens if the mother and/or father who may be offering up a child for adoption do not want that child to be raised by a same sex couple?

This legislation is discriminatory against mothers and fathers by removing their definition from the legislation and the schedules. Who decided our language should be changed? Who asks if words

should be removed? Even if the legislation is passed then mother/father/parent should be left in the schedules?

I realise others will have a different point of view but when I see the rights of the child being ignored in legislation as seen in the Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights released by the Government on this Bill, then I believe I must speak up.

Whilst the Government says this Bill will better reflect current social values, I believe many people don't accept those so called values but in the present climate of fear for speaking out on issues like this one, many people are afraid to voice their opinions.

I support the existing legislation. I do not support the proposed Bill.

Gerry Wood MLA