

Parliamentary Survey on Gender Recognition Bill

Introduction

CommunicateResearch was commissioned by the Christian Institute to conduct a survey of 100 MPs using its online Parliamentary research panel. The survey asked MPs three questions exploring:

1. whether MPs were concerned about religious freedom within the context of recent UK legislative developments
2. whether MPs would support in principle an extension of the exemption given to sports bodies from some of the requirements of the Gender Recognition Bill on religious grounds; and
3. whether MPs would be prepared to support an amendment removing the threat of criminal liability for disclosure that a person is a transsexual, subject to appropriate safeguards.

Summary of findings

Overall the results support some scope for amendment of the two aspects of the Bill which formed the subject of the survey.

Methodology

The survey was conducted on-line between 26 April and 7 May 2004. 100 MPs participated. Data were weighted to reflect the overall balance of the parties in the House of Commons.

FULL DATA:

Q1. Some religious leaders and legal experts have expressed concern at various aspects of recent UK legislation which, they argue, are leading to increasing religious intolerance and restrictions on the right to religious freedom. To what extent, if at all, do you share this concern?

%	All	Con	Lab	Other
Very concerned	6	6	4	18
Fairly concerned	30	36	24	35
Not particularly concerned	41	52	36	36
Not at all concerned	20	6	36	11

Q2. Sports bodies have been exempted from aspects of the Gender Recognition Bill on practical grounds. Some argue that in order not to curtail existing religious freedom, a similar exemption should cover temples, synagogues, mosques and churches in instances where religious freedom is likely otherwise to be affected.

To what extent would you be prepared to support such an extension in principle?

%	All	Con	Lab	Other
Support strongly	26	57	6	26
Support	25	21	27	26
Oppose	26	10	40	18
Oppose strongly	3	2	7	3
No opinion	18	10	20	27

Excl. 'no opinion':

%	All	Con	Lab	Other
Support strongly	33	65	8	38
Support	31	24	33	38
Oppose	32	13	51	26
Oppose strongly	4	-	8	-

Q3. The Gender Recognition Bill contains a clause whereby a minister in a temple, synagogue, mosque or church faces a £5,000 fine and a criminal record for telling a fellow minister that a person in their congregation is a transsexual, even where there is a legitimate reason to do so. In principle, would you be prepared to vote for an amendment exempting religious ministers from this provision, subject to appropriate safeguards?

%	All	Con	Lab	Other
Yes	48	90	24	46
No	36	-	63	27
No opinion	15	10	13	27

Excl. 'no opinion':

%	All	Con	Lab	Other
Yes	56	100	26	63
No	44	-	74	37