

Open Letter to An Taoiseach

An Taoiseach,
Mr Brian Cowen, T.D.,
Department of the Taoiseach,
Government Buildings,
Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2.

Thursday, 3rd December 2009

Dear Taoiseach,

MarriageEquality is a campaign working for equal civil marriage rights for same-sex couples in Ireland.

We ask you to consider upgrading the proposed civil partnership Bill to allow for access to civil marriage for same-sex couples. The introduction of civil partnership as the only option for same-sex couples to have their relationships legally recognised, sends a clear message that lesbians and gay men in Ireland are not considered as equals to heterosexual citizens.

MarriageEquality is conducting a marriage audit, comparing rights gained through civil partnership and those which accompany civil marriage. Initial results based on an analysis of the proposals in the Bill are startling. A same-sex couple who register under the proposed civil partnership scheme will have far fewer rights than a heterosexual married couple in Ireland.

Significantly, the majority of Irish people support the introduction of equal marriage rights in Ireland. Independent polls conducted show that over 80% of Irish people favour full equality regardless of a person's sexuality (Lansdowne Market Research, October 2008).

We call on you Taoiseach to intervene to protect the equal rights of lesbians and gay men in Ireland through upgrading the current bill to allow for access to civil marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples. This would provide protections for lesbian and gay adults, and also give rights to the children of same-sex couple families growing up in Ireland today.

Yours sincerely,

Moninne Griffith
Director
MarriageEquality