



Kathryn Wakeling
Christian Concern For Our Nation
70 Wimpole Street
London
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Our ref: TO0872

May 2010

Dear Ms Wakeling,

PETITION ABOUT LORD ALLI'S AMENDMENT TO THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

Thank you for your letter of 23rd March 2010 to the Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP about your petition to reject Lord Alli's amendment to the Equality Act 2010 removing the prohibition on civil partnerships taking place in religious premises.

Lord Alli tabled an amendment to the Equality Bill during the House of Lords Report stage to remove the express prohibition on civil partnership registrations taking place in religious premises in England and Wales. This amendment was debated on Tuesday 2 March and pressed to a division, on which all parties were allowed a free vote. The amendment was approved by a majority of 95 to 21 and now appears as section 202 of the Equality Act 2010.

During the debate on this provision, Lord Alli made clear that its intention was to allow religious groups to host civil partnership registrations **only** if they choose to do so. He also made clear that no religious group should be forced to open their place of worship to civil partnerships if they do not wish to do so.

Section 202 will be able to have effect only when provision is made through secondary legislation for the registration of religious premises for the purpose of registering civil partnerships. The regulations which govern the registration of premises for the purposes of registering of civil partnerships are the Civil Partnerships and Marriages (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005. Any such changes to these regulations would be made only after full public consultation.

Emma Reed
Discrimination Law Team