

Email from **Steve Baker MP**, referencing the statement reproduced above

*15 January 2013*

Dear Mr. Dexter,

Thank you for writing to me regarding gay marriage legislation. Since I last replied, there have been more developments but my position has not changed.

I have been asked why my name is not on a letter supporting traditional marriage. I have taken the decision not to sign any letter, either for or against. My view has not wavered since the issue was first raised in this Parliament. I note the Secretary of State's remark yesterday that there has been legislation on marriage for 170 years: that is hardly any time at all in the history of the institution. I think today we are learning some of the problems of legislating in this essentially private matter and I am delighted that more of my colleagues are, in private, coming around to my view.

In my last letter I wrote:

I anticipate that the measure will inevitably compromise freedom of religion, conscience and expression... [Therefore] I anticipate voting against the measure on the basis that it is highly likely to compromise those other freedoms.

The country should brace itself for the reality that any Bill is likely to be passed despite objections from a number of colleagues on both sides of the House. Almost of all of the Labour Party, all of the Liberals and perhaps half of Conservatives will be voting for the measure when it appears before the House.

I seek always to base my views on the doctrine of liberty under the law, which includes the moral, legal and political equality of every person and tolerance, the notion of refraining from use of law in the face of irreconcilable difference of opinion. I will therefore continue to promote the view I have set out.

Once again, thank you for contacting me on this issue. I will be sure to discuss it with the Prime Minister when I see him shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Baker MP