

# Religious groups in Scotland overwhelmingly disapprove of gay marriage

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Edinburgh, Scotland, December 9 (ENInews)--Although a recent survey showed 62 percent of Scots favor gay marriage, the country's main religious denominations overwhelmingly disapprove of it--though many observers think religious voices are less influential than they used to be.

In response to the Scottish Government's consultation document, "The Registration of Civil Partnerships, Same Sex Marriage," the Church of Scotland said it "cannot agree that the law of Scotland should be changed to allow same-sex marriage. To redefine marriage to include same sex marriage may have significant and, as yet, inadequately considered repercussions for our country, for the well-being of families, communities and individuals."

The Roman Catholic Church has also condemned the government's stance. In a strongly worded statement, Cardinal Keith O'Brien called on it not to demolish what he called "a universally recognized human right" by dismantling the meaning of marriage, saying that "marriage long predates the existence of any state or government."

That viewpoint was echoed by Dr. Salah Beltagui of the Muslim Council of Scotland. "We are totally against the ideas of same sex couples getting married," he said. "God created man and he created woman so they could marry and have families. Same sex marriages are completely out of order. No government on earth has the right to change the nature of marriage which was instituted by God."

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities also opposes same-sex relations, which the Torah forbids. A statement on its website says "All branches of the Scottish Jewish community strongly agree that religious bodies that do not wish to do so,

should not be required to register civil partnerships."

However, leaders of the Liberal Jewish community "strongly supports the introduction of religious civil partnership ceremonies and hopes that legislation to permit these will be introduced at the earliest opportunity," according to a statement.

Church of Scotland minister Ian Galloway wasn't surprised by his church's stance: "The response came from the legal affairs committee of the Church of Scotland and their response is based on the law as it is, a legal response and not a moral or a theological response," he said. Galloway admits it's possible people may leave the church because of its position on gay marriage.