



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 27, 2012

## Scotland Set to Legalize Same-sex Marriage, Despite Majority Opposition

The government of Scotland has decided to disregard the wishes of two-thirds of its citizens and move ahead with legislation to legalize same-sex marriage. According to Britain's [Telegraph](#) newspaper, Scottish Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced July 25 that she would push through legislation to legalize homosexual partnerships even though 64 percent of respondents to a recent public consultation indicated they opposed the move. Sturgeon said she would like to have homosexual marriage ceremonies begin in the country in 2015, the same year Britain's Prime Minister, David Cameron, is pushing for them to begin in England.



Sturgeon said that that the ruling Scottish National Party is "committed to a Scotland that is fair and equal and that is why we intend to proceed with plans to allow same-sex marriage and religious ceremonies for civil partnerships. We believe that this is the right thing to do. We are also mindful of the fact that the leaders of all of the other parties represented in parliament support same-sex marriage and that there is significant parliamentary support for legislation."

[Reuters News](#) reported that the announcement by the Scottish government follows the pledge by Britain's Prime Minister Cameron that he would move ahead with legislation to legalize homosexual partnerships in England. On July 24 Cameron told a group of homosexuals in London that he was "determined" to push through the unpopular legislation despite opposition within his own Conservative Party. Cameron apologetically told his homosexual audience that his party had wrongly limited marriage to only between a man and woman. "It locked people out who were naturally Conservative from supporting it," he said, "and so I think I can make that point to the Church, gently."

Britain's Church of England has opposed same-sex marriage, insisting that the "intrinsic nature of marriage [is] the union of a man and a woman."

In making the announcement, Sturgeon promised that the Scottish legislation would include conscience protections for churches and clergy who object to homosexual marriage on scriptural grounds. "...we recognize and respect the concerns that some have expressed, in particular the concerns that have been expressed by the churches," she insisted. "We are determined that the legislation which is brought forward will include protection for freedom of speech and freedom of religion."

According to the *Telegraph*, Sturgeon "said existing equalities legislation prevents churches from being forced to conduct same-sex marriages, but the law may have to be extended to protect individual clergymen from legal action."

"This is a very controversial issue," said Sturgeon. "There is no getting away from that. There are very



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deeply held views on this issue on both sides of the debate. It is not possible to completely reconcile these different views. But as we proceed with this issue, the Scottish government will continue to be respectful of differences of opinion.”

A spokesman for the Catholic Church in Scotland said that the “Scottish government is embarking on a dangerous social experiment on a massive scale. We strongly suspect that time will show the Church to have been completely correct in explaining that same-sex sexual relationships are detrimental to any love expressed within profound friendships.”

The Free Church of Scotland said in a statement that “this is a truly sad day for Scotland, and we urge the Scottish government to reconsider their plans.”

The *Telegraph* noted that both the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church have led the opposition to same-sex marriage in Scotland, warning it would destroy the traditional institution of marriage and that clergy would face legal action in the courts if they refuse to “marry” homosexual couples.

A spokesman with [Scotland for Marriage](#), which has solid support inside the nation’s churches, said that the group is “deeply unhappy at the decision by the Scottish Government to proceed with its plans to redefine marriage by proceeding with legislation which will penalize and punish those who disagree with redefining marriage.” The spokesman noted that the Scottish National Party government “ignored their own public consultation, and announced that they will proceed with legislation even though — by their own admission — the civil liberty concerns still hang in the balance. It has become abundantly clear [that] the proposals from the outset have been ill-conceived and poorly thought out with no consideration for the views of the vast majority in the country, including people of faith.”

He added that “hundreds of years of matrimonial law should not be unraveled in such a cavalier fashion, riding roughshod over public opinion in the process.”

Photos: (Left) Scottish Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon; (right) The Burning Bush emblem of the Church of Scotland, above the entrance to the Church Offices in Edinburgh.



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