

## Written evidence submitted by Mrs Margaret Parker [HAB0172]

Marriage has been shown to be a much more stable relationship than cohabitation; there is more commitment in it and society itself benefits. When a couple enters the life-long commitment of marriage then the law automatically provides for them when death occurs.

*“ Marriage delivers significantly better outcomes when compared to cohabitation ...Children from stable families are less likely to be excluded and tend to do better at school, are less likely to be involved with the criminal justice system and have better employment outcomes .... Two thirds of children of cohabiting parents have experienced the loss of a parent by the time they are 12 .... Parents who are married enjoy healthier lifestyles, greater levels of relationship satisfaction and higher earnings.” Conclusion: “The differences between cohabitation and marriage are not negligible. The government should stop pretending they are.”*

**Centre for Social Justice “Family Structure Report” August 2020**

*“The average length of cohabitation in Britain and the United States is less than 5 years. The formal act of commitment that constitutes marriage makes a difference to the strength and durability of relationship.”*

**Jonathan Sacks, “MORALITY, Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times”; `Fragile Families` p66**

I have just done an on-line study of how many cabinet ministers are married – **it is nearly ALL of them!** So why is the Government trying to reward the second-best relationship of cohabitation which leads to lots of bad outcomes, including the abandonment of – usually – the mother to bring up children. I have read that over 1 million children have never seen their father! What misery that leads to including mental health issues of loneliness, depression and even suicide, and difficulty in making good relationships – a cycle of deprivation. The cost to society is huge, whichever way you look at it.

*“In 2011 92% of single-parent households were women” (Jonathan Sacks, as above).*

If couples want financial help and a fairer deal with regard to property, they can have a simple wedding, as has been shown during the Lock-downs – I know a couple at my church who married with 3 others present plus the minister. If the Government allow equal rights, how long would someone have to cohabit in order to qualify? What are the criteria? Very complicated and likely to produce much more acrimony and misery, particularly for the children.

***“The law of unintended consequences will always defeat our best intentions.”***

**MARRIAGE IS BETTER** and the Government should be promoting it not devaluing it.

**June 2021**