

Written evidence from Miss Elizabeth Crump [HAB0306]

I would like to thank you for considering the legal rights and position of cohabiting couples. In the United Kingdom, we are blessed to have so many who emphasize justice and equality.

However, I am concerned that giving the same parallel legal rights (as married couples) to cohabiting couples would greatly undermine the importance of marriage in our society. Whilst marriage is intended to be a lifelong commitment (with public vows), 'living together' has no such public commitment. It is legally much easier to break a relationship with a 'cohabiting partner'. Such relationships are thus unstable.

Indeed, this instability has a huge bearing on the younger generation. As I understand, more than half of children of cohabiting parents will experience their parents' separation by the time they are five years old. This statistic is reduced to 15% of children of married parents. As someone who works in education, I see daily the painful effects of parental separation on young people.

Children are not the only ones to be affected by the 'ease' of separation. The pain of such a division greatly impacts the couple themselves, and can lead to mental and physical health problems.

Surely we should be encouraging couples to marry and commit to a lifelong relationship, supported by their friends and family! Marriage is a foundational building block of society. When we undermine it, we generate insecurity and instability. This is my strong belief and conviction.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this response.

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