

Evangelical Alliance Public Affairs Prayer and Campaigns

evangelical alliance
uniting to change society



General Election



Election Resources

The Evangelical Alliance is encouraging churches to engage in the political process as the General Election draws near.

One way for churches to get involved is to organise local hustings with the candidates standing in your constituency. This is an excellent opportunity for churches to come together and for the public to ask questions about the issues they are concerned about.

The Evangelical Alliance website contains a guide for churches on how to organise and run hustings. Also available on the website is an introduction to the political parties and an overview of their positions on a wide range of policy areas. www.eauk.org/elections

“Myth-Busters” for Local Authorities

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has issued a ‘Myth-Buster’ to help Local Authorities deal with faith groups. This provides a helpful guide to how faith groups operate and encourages authorities to partner with them in the delivery of public services. The guide was announced at a conference where faith groups were praised for their hard work and commitment to local communities.

For more information on the Myth-Busters please visit <http://www.eauk.org/articles/john-denham.cfm>

Equality Bill

The Evangelical Alliance is calling on the Government to guarantee that churches will genuinely be free to choose whether or not to hold civil partnerships without risk of future anti-discrimination lawsuits following an unexpected amendment to the Civil Partnerships Act.



While acknowledging that the change to the Civil Partnerships Act - enabling churches to conduct civil partnerships on their premises if they so wish - is in keeping with the important principle of religious freedom the Alliance is concerned anti-discrimination actions under the Equality Act will undermine this protection and leave churches confused about what they are allowed to do. Denominations and independent churches we have to opt in or out of the provisions which may require amendments to their trust deeds.

The Alliance is asking on the Government to make clear that no church will ever in the future be able to be successfully sued on grounds of discrimination for failing to allow a civil ceremony while it continues to permit religious marriages.

Please pray that the Government will ensure that churches have the necessary protection to choose not to hold civil partnership ceremonies. Please also pray that the distinction between civil partnerships and marriage remains clear.

Catholic Adoption Agencies

Following the implementation of the Sexual Orientation Regulations (SORs) all goods and services had to be provided without discrimination. This meant that Catholic adoption agencies who chose not to place children with homosexual couples would have to close down. Catholic Care, an agency working in the Leeds, Middlesbrough and Hallam dioceses refused to accept this limitation and appealed to the High Court. Their appeal was successful and the Charity Commission have been asked to re-look at Catholic Care’s request for an exemption to the SORs.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission criticised the judgement stating that organisations in receipt of public money should not be allowed to discriminate in a way that breaches human rights. The Evangelical Alliance has responded to the Commission pointing out that human rights work both ways, that the freedom to express religious belief also requires protection. Furthermore, the law allows for *legal* discrimination in many cases in order to balance competing rights.

The Equality Bill receives its Third Reading in the House of Lords on 23rd March, and an amendment granting an exception to Catholic adoption agencies from the SORs will be considered.

Please pray that Catholic Care and other adoption agencies will continue to be able to provide homes for the most vulnerable children. Please pray that the House of Lords will accept the amendment to the Equality Bill.

For further articles and information see “PQ – Christian Perspectives on Public Affairs”
Available free on our web site www.eauk.org

For more information or to comment please email pub-aff@eauk.org

Evangelical Alliance, 186 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BT www.eauk.org

March 2010

March 2010