



## PRESS RELEASE

### Civil Partnership Bill – Tories Wreck Bill

The Directors of Isis Financial Planners, the UK's leading authority on financial discrimination against same-sex couples, are saddened to learn that a Tory amendment, which could wreck the bill, has been passed in the House of Lords by 148 votes to 130.

The amendment, proposed by Baroness O'Cathain, the leading opponent of the bill, and supported by such long-time opponents of gay rights as Lord Tebbit, proposes that the rights included in the bill be extended not just to same sex couples but also to carers and family members living in the same property. This makes a nonsense of the bill, which is intended specifically to give protection to same-sex partners in committed relationships.

The legislation will have to be redrafted to reflect the new amendment before it passes to the House of Commons for debate. The Government will hope to overturn the amendment in the Commons, where they have a large majority.

Director Maggie Fleming said *'It is cynical of the Tories to pretend that they care about the rights of carers and siblings when all they want to do is wreck the civil partnership legislation. They know full well that there are plans for a separate bill that will look after the rights of carers. This bill is intended for a specific purpose – to give legal status to same-sex couples. Michael Howard has been trying to attract gay voters to his party and even said that he supported civil partnership legislation. But he has misled the public - it was all a cynical ploy. Today the Conservative Party showed its true feelings about gay people and proved that they're the same bunch of bigots they always were.'*

Director Louis Letourneau said *'This amendment is ludicrous. For example, if you had a civil partnership between two sisters and one of them wanted to get married, the partnership would first have to be dissolved. Or, if you had three sisters, could they all be*



*civil partners or would two of them form a partnership and the third be left out? The Tories are trying to destroy the bill by making it ridiculous and unworkable.*

*These problems would never have arisen if the Government had followed the lead of some other countries and introduced a provision deeming that the word 'spouse', where it appears anywhere in law, is taken to include civil partners as well.*

*In the light of this Tory tactic, perhaps it is now time for the gay community to press for full marriage rights in order to obtain equality in the areas of pensions and taxation.'*

The tone of the debate was reminiscent of previous occasions on which Tories in the Lords held up Government plans to get rid of Section 28 and lower the age of consent. One peer, Lord Maginnis, a former Ulster Unionist MP, even referred to '*unnatural sexual practices*' in the course of the debate.

People wishing to register their disapproval of the Tories' actions may wish to write to Baroness O'Cathain and Lord Tebbit at the House of Lords.



## **Editors' Notes**

### **Resources for Journalists and the Media**

More information on this issue can be found at [www.gay-partnership-rights.info](http://www.gay-partnership-rights.info). Our main site, [www.gayfinance.info](http://www.gayfinance.info), contains a wealth of material on gay financial discrimination, and has been used by many organisations as the basis of their articles.

### **Isis Financial Planners Limited**

Isis was founded in February 2002 by Letourneau, Fleming and Mudge – three highly experienced Financial Planners who had previously worked for the gay financial advisers, Rainbow Finance. In their first 2 years of trading Isis have become the most prominent, totally independent, gay-focussed financial planners in the country, with help and advice offered to gay men, lesbians and same-sex couples. All three of them have been active in campaigning for change for many years. They see the proposed Bill as the best opportunity in years to bring about major reform.



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