

# Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

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Source Christian Institute

The Government is pressing ahead with plans to further weaken marriage in England and Wales by introducing its 'no-fault divorce' Bill into the House of Commons.

The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill would allow a husband or wife to divorce their spouse in six months, without having to give any reason.

The Christian Institute's Director Colin Hart described the Bill as 'euthanasia for marriage'.

## **One-sided**

Currently, if couples wish to divorce, they must show the marriage has 'irretrievably broken down' by proving one of five 'facts'.

These are adultery, desertion, unreasonable behaviour, two years' separation where both parties consent, and five years' separation where one party does not.

But if the Bill becomes law, the spouse who wishes to walk out will only need to submit a statement of irretrievable breakdown.

It will also remove any possibility of contesting a divorce. A spouse who does not wish to be divorced will have no opportunity to make their case.

No. of divorces in 2017

- 42,500 on the basis of either two years' separation (with consent), or five years' separation (without consent).

- 58,000 on the basis of a fault such as adultery.

## **Concerns**

Mr Hart said: "Under Government plans an innocent spouse will not be able to cite adultery or domestic violence in a divorce petition. The no-fault divorce scheme is plainly unjust."

"Couples struggling through a difficult time in their marriage need time and opportunity to reconcile. This legislation seems to block off this possibility.

"The Government's main argument is that fault-based divorces lead to acrimony. If that is so, why is the Government also abolishing separation grounds which never involve any allegation of fault?"

"Four out of ten divorces are on the basis of separation and take well over two years. Under the Government's plan it will be six months. A massive speeding up of divorce. It's also disturbing that the Government has been trialling an online scheme which claims to process divorces in twelve weeks.

"This Bill is a euthanasia programme for marriage."

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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