

I write to express my grave concern at the implications of the proposed legislation.

I am alarmed at the way in which legislation that may have the highest motives can be manipulated by criminal elements especially with the assistance of clever legal council. Hence the Evidence Amendment Bill will no doubt have some loop holes -- no matter how hard our legislators try to prevent it.

However there is a more serious implication in the undermining of the significance of the whole concept of marriage.

After spending all my working life in people related professions I am alarmed that such a move could be even considered.

I realize that there are vocal minorities desiring to upgrade other relationships to the privileged status our heritage and constitution gives to marriage but I believe that the results will be further damaging for future generations.

I would sincerely plead for the committee to take seriously the rights of the children no doubt affected and the overall impact on a society where the loss of the Christian concensus has already led to fewer couples being married. The statistics make it quite clear that those who choose alternative options to marriage have less stable relationships no matter how sincere their good intentions when the relationship is initiated.

While it is not my primary concern it is worth pointing out that the cost in tax payers dollars continues to rise with benefits and counselling costs associated when members of our community experience psychological damage.

Again please hear a strong plea to uphold this most basis of our institutions--the marriage bond.

Yours faithfully  
Dr Donald W Hardgrave