

The House of Lords today passed a bill from the Bishop of St Albans to end the historic inequality of excluding mothers' names from marriage certificates. The Registration of Marriage Bill, which would also introduce electronic marriage registers, passed its final stage in the House of Lords today and now moves to the House of Commons to be considered by MPs. It is the first time a Bishop's Private Member's Bill has proceeded to the House of Commons in more than 20 years.

Speaking after the Lords passed the Bill, the Bishop of St Albans, Dr Alan Smith, said: "I am delighted that the House of Lords has backed this Bill, which now gives the House of Commons an opportunity to correct a clear and historic injustice.

"As someone who has performed hundreds of marriages, it has always seemed shocking to me that mothers are systematically overlooked.

"This injustice dates to 1837 when children were viewed as a father's property and little consideration was given to women. In this centenary year of women's suffrage it is time to make this long overdue change.

"I am pleased to have had the backing not only of Peers and many in the Church, but a huge number of others, including tens of thousands who have signed public petitions, campaigners for women's equality, and even genealogists.

"MPs from all parties support the aims of this Bill. I hope and expect the Government to treat it as a legislative priority when it comes to the Commons in the autumn, and urge MPs to give it their approval."

Notes for editors

- The Registration of Marriage Bill [HL] is a Private member's Bill introduced to the House of Lords by the Bishop of St Albans in June 2017. It passed its final stage in the Lords, known as Third Reading, on 24th July 2018. [The Bill and its Explanatory Notes can be found here.](#)
- The Bill now moves to the House of Commons where it will be picked up and taken forwards by Rt Hon Dame Caroline Spelman MP, who is the Second Church Estates Commissioner.
- Dame Caroline Spelman MP introduced a Bill with identical aims in the House of Commons last year.
- The last time a Bishop successfully navigated a Private Member's Bill through the House of Lords was in 1996, when the then Bishop of Southwark took through what became the 'Marriage Ceremony (Prescribed Words) Act 1996', a Bill first introduced in the House of Commons by Julian Brazier MP.