Examples of the Prime Minister and Other Leading Conservatives Promoting the Policy of Recognising Marriage in the Tax System Before the General Election

The Prime Minister David Cameron speaking on the aforementioned ‘Broken Britain’ report in 2007:

‘I welcome this report’s emphasis on the family, and on marriage, as the basis for the social progress we all want to see.’

‘Britain is almost the only country in Europe that doesn’t recognise marriage in the tax system.’

‘Our support for families and for marriage puts us on the side of the mainstream majority, on the side of a progressive politics, on the side of change that says we can stop social decline, we can fix our broken society, we can and will make this a better place to live for everyone.’

And in July 2008 in Glasgow, Mr Cameron continued to affirm this stance by saying:

‘And when it comes to perhaps the most important area of all, families we will take action not just to support marriage and family stability.’

‘Saying to parents, your responsibility and your commitment matters, so we will give a tax break for marriage and end the couple penalty.’

Furthermore, in 2010, in the run up to the general election at a speech in Doncaster Mr Cameron appeared to become even more vociferous in his support for marriage:

‘But I absolutely feel at my very core that recognising that relationships matter, that commitment matters and, yes, that marriage matters is something we should not say quietly but something we should say loudly and proudly.’

‘What is so backward looking in a country where we have social breakdown and social problems of saying that committed relationships, encouraging people to come together and stay together is a bad thing? Of course it isn’t, it’s not outdated if you look around the European Union, if you look around the OECD, we’re almost alone in not recognising marriage in the tax system. And why do we think, why do we think that with our appalling record of family breakdown that somehow we are in the right position and everyone else is in the wrong position; we’re not, they’ve got it right and we have got it wrong.’

‘And this week evidence was produced to show that when it comes to how many couples are still together when your child reaches their fifteenth birthday ninety seven per cent of them are married couples.’

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‘Do I think we’d be a stronger society if more people chose to do that, if more people got married, if fewer people separated? Yes I do. Do I think that committed relationships really matter? Yes I do. All the evidence tells us that. All of our own knowledge and self knowledge recognises that.’

We can therefore be categorically sure that David Cameron, did, before the election not only support the institution of marriage but vigorously campaigned and pledged to recognise it in the UK tax system through the implementation of a transferable allowance. Yet, we should not gain the impression from this that it was only the Prime Minister that was in support of recognising marriage. Indeed, Maria Miller, now parliamentary under secretary for the Department of Work and Pensions also publicly expressed her support, saying:

‘The biggest challenge of all is creating broader context within which families can thrive. And to recognise the very real role that marriage still has in British society.’

‘A Conservative Government will support marriage, through the tax and benefit system and remove the ‘couple penalty’ from the benefits system which will lift 300,000 children in two parent families out of poverty.’

Furthermore, David Willetts has also come out and expressed his support for recognising marriage in the tax system:

‘Another way we can help families is by recognising marriage in the tax system. When people make a public commitment to support each other it is right for the tax system to recognise it. Some countries do treat us just as individuals for income tax purposes. That is what they do in Turkey, oh yes, and in Mexico too. Labour may believe in the Turkish-Mexican model but most other advanced Western countries do recognise marriage in the income tax system. That’s what they do in France. That’s what they do in Germany. That’s what they do in the USA. And that’s what we’ll do too.

This is our approach to families. We are not going to berate them. We are going to help them.’

We could go on and mention more Conservative MPs, including the chancellor George Osborne who has expressed very similar sentiments. Needless to say then that across the board, there was, before the 2010 general election broad and strongly voiced support for this measure, it even made it into official Conservative party pledge pamphlets and into the 2010 Conservative general election manifesto.

Continued support for a transferable allowance, albeit a partial and one which will start at a fairly nominal rate has again been portrayed by the prime minister since the Coalition came to power:

[^6]: Never voted Tory before? The Conservative Party and Reconstruction, Renewal, Repair, Conservative Party, p.6
[^7]: Conservative Party 2010 General Election Manifesto, 2010, p.52
Examples of the Prime Minister Promoting the Policy of Recognising Marriage in the Tax System After the General Election

‘But we think that sending a signal that strong families are at the heart of a strong society is a good thing to do. I would like to do more. But we are in very straitened circumstances, so I see this as a first step, and it’s about the message more than the money.’

‘I believe that we should bring forward proposals to recognise marriage in the tax system. Those in our happy coalition will have the right to abstain on them, I am happy to say, but I support marriage. We support so many other things in the tax system, including Christmas parties and parking bicycles at work, so why do we not recognise marriage?’

‘If we are going to get control of public spending in the long term in this country, we should target the causes of higher spending, one of which is family breakdown. We should do far more to recognise the importance of families, commitment and marriage—and let me just say that any recognition of marriage that we put in the tax system will also be recognition of civil partnerships, because commitment is important, whether someone is straight or gay.’

‘I have always supported the idea of supporting marriage through the tax system, specifically supporting the idea of a transferable tax allowance. The idea of a transferable tax allowance is in the coalition agreement.’

‘It’s something we would like to do this parliament but I hope you will bear with me as I try to announce one policy at a time.’

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9 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffmUeRi_2gM
10 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100602/debtext/100602-0002.htm#1006029000529 2nd Jun 2010
11 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11478320 5th October 2010