# SNP MSP’s 4am Cayman Islands vote blocks Green MSP’s removal from Holyrood equalities committee



Stirling MSP Evelyn Tweed played a pivotal role from the Cayman Islands in defending Green politician Maggie Chapman's position on Holyrood’s equalities committee, amid a politically charged atmosphere surrounding the ongoing debate over transgender rights.

The crucial vote took place on Tuesday, following Ms Chapman’s controversial comments in which she described the Supreme Court's ruling on the definition of a “biological woman” for equality law purposes as embodying “bigotry.” In this context, a Conservative motion was raised to remove Ms Chapman from her committee role, which she has held as deputy convener.

Representing the Scottish National Party (SNP) on the committee, Ms Tweed's involvement was uniquely complicated by her geographical location. While in the British Overseas Territory of the Cayman Islands, where she was serving as an international observer for the island’s elections under the auspices of the UK’s Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, she participated remotely. The Cayman Islands operates on a time zone six hours behind the UK, meaning Ms Tweed cast her vote around 4 am local time.

Complicating matters further, committee convener Karen Adam had to remind Ms Tweed to turn on her camera to ensure her vote was officially counted. Ultimately, her “no” vote was pivotal; had it not been for her participation, the committee's decision could have resulted in a tie, leaving Ms Chapman’s future with the committee uncertain.

North East Tory MSP Tess White expressed her concerns, describing the situation as “astonishing” and suggesting it reflects a disconnect among SNP members from the realities faced by voters. In her comments, she asserted, “Maggie Chapman’s skin was saved by a nationalist MSP getting up in the middle of the night while enjoying herself in the Caribbean.” She further articulated her belief that voters would find it unacceptable that a vote cast from such a distance influenced the outcome regarding Ms Chapman’s role, especially following the politician's statements regarding the Supreme Court.

When questioned about Ms Tweed’s unorthodox voting circumstances, a spokesperson for the MSP confirmed that she participated remotely while attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association trip.

This vote unfolded against a backdrop of intense debate around the rights of transgender individuals versus those of women, an area that has generated significant controversy in recent months. Ms Chapman, in her defense during the hearing, acknowledged the court's authority but reiterated her disagreement with the ruling, stating: “I have never questioned the court’s right to make the ruling that it did. That does not mean I must agree with it. I don’t.”

First Minister John Swinney had previously indicated that the SNP would refrain from instructing committee members how to vote, highlighting the individual discretion of the party's representatives in these discussions. This latest vote adds another layer of complexity to an already contentious topic in Scottish politics. The implications of such discussions and decisions continue to resonate within the broader context of gender rights and equality.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/recent-publication?iob=139354&meeting=16311> - This source provides the official record of the Scottish Parliament meeting where the committee discussed the motion to remove Maggie Chapman from her role, highlighting the political dynamics and the importance of Evelyn Tweed's vote.
2. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23119833.greens-reveal-red-lines-gender-bill-snp-seek-quell-revolt/> - This article discusses the Scottish Greens' position on the Gender Recognition Reform Bill, including Maggie Chapman's amendments and the internal party debates, contextualizing the political environment surrounding the committee's decisions.
3. <https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/politics/maggie-chapman-blasted-over-gender-28462564> - This piece covers the controversy over Maggie Chapman's comments on the Gender Recognition Reform Bill, providing insight into the contentious nature of the discussions within the Scottish Parliament.
4. <https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/politics/maggie-chapman-calls-full-conversion-32797944> - This article details Maggie Chapman's call for a full ban on conversion therapy, reflecting her stance on LGBTQIA+ rights and the broader debates within the Scottish political landscape.
5. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/politics/scottish-politics/4062886/gender-recognition-maggie-chapman/> - This source reports on Maggie Chapman's comments regarding the minimum age for gender recognition, shedding light on the policy discussions and controversies within the Scottish Parliament.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maggie_Chapman> - This Wikipedia page provides a comprehensive overview of Maggie Chapman's political career, controversies, and positions, offering context to her role in the Scottish Parliament and the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee.
7. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/politics/5234609/stirling-msp-maggie-chapman-cayman-islands/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data