



NANCY WYMAN
COMPTROLLER

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER
55 ELM STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1775

MARK E. OJAKIAN
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER

Testimony of State Comptroller Nancy Wyman
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Good morning Sen. McDonald, Rep. Lawlor, Sen. Kissel, Rep. O'Neill and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am State Comptroller Nancy Wyman and I am here to testify in support of **Raised Bill 7395: *AN ACT CONCERNING MARRIAGE EQUALITY.***

I can sum up my support for this bill in one sentence:

To violate the rights of a few is to violate the rights of all.

And until Connecticut recognizes the civil marriage of same-sex couples, the rights and liberties promised in our federal and state constitutions are lessened for every one of us.

We have all heard the facts about how those in a civil union as opposed to a marriage are denied access to more than a thousand federal protections, and never know if a right granted in one state might be prohibited in another.

From how much in taxes they pay to hospital visiting privileges to Social Security, inheritance and child-custody rights, failing to recognize the right of these couples to marry prohibits them from full participation in our society.

Those are very important issues which merit passage of this bill on their own. But beyond the numbers and the tax implications, this is a family issue.

There are thousands of children in Connecticut right now being raised by same-sex couples. Denying their parents equality denies equality for them, as well. Which is why I want to take particular note of one section of this bill that reads:

“The best interests of a child are promoted when the child is part of a loving, supportive and stable family, whether that family is a nuclear, extended, split, blended, single parent, adoptive or foster family.”

I think that says it all.

On a final note, I am proud to say that my agency was a leader in offering same-sex domestic partner health benefits to state employees nearly seven years ago. And what has been the result? Chaos? Hundreds of couples streaming into our offices being met by angry protestors?

Hardly. What has happened is that a few dozen workers and their partners have quietly signed up for the plan and are now able to provide their families with a quality health insurance plan. Nothing more, nothing less.

I believe passage of this bill will result in a similar reaction – or non-reaction – as the Boston Globe noted in an editorial earlier this year regarding the enactment of same-sex marriages in Massachusetts.

“We are still waiting to hear of the first heterosexual couple whose marriage has been damaged,” the editors wrote, “by the more than 8,500 same-sex marriages performed here since 2004.”

I thank you for your time and I will be happy to take any questions you may have.