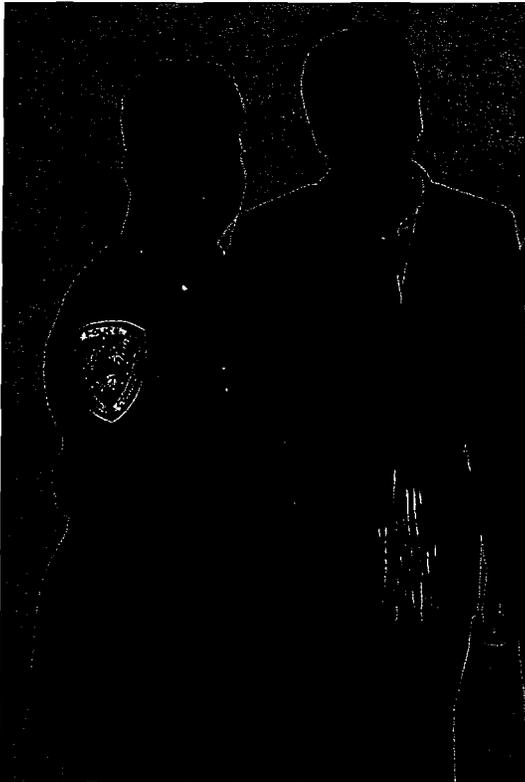


TESTIMONY OF AMY PEAR

IN SUPPORT OF HB 7395: AN ACT CONCERNING MARRIAGE EQUALITY



Capt. Amy Pear and June Lynn Lockert
Together for 13 years

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of the marriage equality legislation.

My name is Amy Pear, and I live in Haddam, CT with my life partner June Lynn Lockert. I am a lifelong Connecticut resident who was raised by parents whom I credit for instilling the value of commitment in my relationship. I have spent the last 18 years of my life protecting and serving the public with the Middletown Police Department, where I currently hold the rank of Captain. I have worked very hard with my union to provide equal work for equal pay to all of its members.

For the last 13 years June has stood by my side and endured the life of a police officer's spouse. When we first met I was working as a narcotics detective. This meant she would wait up very late for me to come home, not knowing what could happen while we executed search warrants, served warrants on drug dealers, and dealt with scores of other unpredictable and potentially dangerous situations. Then it meant putting up with me while I studied for the sergeant's position, went through the testing processes, then being all over again on the midnight shift. Having to go to sleep at night alone, not knowing what the morning would bring. Then it was

time to take the lieutenant's exam and finally the captain's promotion. These tests included written tests, oral interview panels, and chiefs' interviews. During these promotions I was also pursuing my master's degree.

When civil unions were legalized, June and I were torn over the decision to have one or not. I did not want to settle for a legal commitment that was not equal to marriage. My partner and I both understand the importance of the marriage. To us marriage means dedicating ourselves to one another. Until recently I did not believe the word marriage was so important. Now I understand the fact that marriage is a right I deserve.

Even though we felt that Civil Union fell short of the full equality that only marriage could give us, due to the danger in my job, we decided to have a civil union-- or should I say get committed or what exactly did we have? Whatever it was we did it to protect our family in the event that I would die in the line of duty. I am still not sure if June would be provided with death benefits if I were killed on the job. Our contract language is similar to most others, but they only address death benefits for *married* spouses.

A civil union does afford some recognition and rights, yet every time I think about or discuss this issue I am struck by the fact that it is not proper to create a separate institution. We should have learned from history that you can not create separate institutions and consider them equal.

I am simply asking this committee to value all of the residents of Connecticut no matter what their sexual orientation and allow us to go to city hall to obtain a marriage license, a civil agreement. Our lives, and our relationships, are no less worthy of full equality.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Pear

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