

# Connecticut State UAW CAP Council



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## TESTIMONY TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

MARCH 26, 2007

In support of Raised Bill 7395, AAC Marriage Equality

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and Members of the Committee, good afternoon. My name is Peggy Shorey. I am an International Representative with the UAW and also President of *CT Pride at Work*, a constituency group of the AFL-CIO.

**On behalf of the UAW CT CAP Council and UAW Region 9A Director Bob Madore, I wish to express our support for AAC Marriage Equality.** While civil union enacts some important rights, it does not provide for true equality.

Labor has a long history of fighting for equal rights for all working people. As a union we support equal rights, equal treatment and dignity and respect for *all* workers.

The UAW is one of the most diverse unions in the country. Our members include manufacturing workers, marine draftsmen, legal aid attorneys, public employees, child care teachers, bus drivers and others. Our members are from varied racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds. What brings us together is the one prime directive of the labor movement: "An Injury to One is An Injury to All."

People have different religious beliefs, and also beliefs about the importance of treating people as you'd like to be treated. We respect people's religious differences, and also believe that government doesn't take sides on religious matters. This issue is not about religious marriage; this is about who can get a civil marriage license from the government and enter into a legal relationship of commitment and obligations.

Without civil marriage, some workers are denied access to benefits, rights and responsibilities that are entitled to others. These include social security and veterans benefits paid upon the death of a spouse; the right to file joint taxes; the ability to be on a spouse's health insurance without having to claim it as income. Same-sex couples do not have the right to sponsor a spouse for immigration purposes. The civil union legislation, while it does offers some rights, does not extend FMLA benefits to municipal employees. Same-sex couples who relocate risk losing protections for their families when they cross a state line.

At the end of the day, public policy should serve to provide equal rights and treatment to all residents of this state. **We urge your support of An Act Concerning Marriage Equality.**