



Judiciary Committee

Testimony By:

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Executive Director, DemocracyWorks

In Support of H.B. 7395 An Act Concerning Marriage Equality

Good afternoon Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Joyce Hamilton Henry and I am the Executive Director of DemocracyWorks. DemocracyWorks is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to make democracy work fairly, inclusively and vibrantly for all. We work to increase civic participation particularly by disenfranchised and underrepresented individuals and communities.

DemocracyWorks is in full support of H.B. 7359, An Act Concerning Marriage Equality which would allow full equality for same sex couples as are available to heterosexual couples. We ask that you allow same-sex couples to marry effective October 1, 2007. It provides an orderly way for people previously in civil unions to transition into marriages.

- Persons already in a civil union as of that date (Oct. 1, 2007) may apply to be issued a marriage license and, once the marriage is solemnized and they are legally married, their previous civil union is automatically dissolved by operation of law.
- If a couple chooses not to go through the marriage process, then if their civil union is in effect as of October 1, 2008, it will be converted to a marriage on that date, they will be legally married and the civil union will be dissolved by operation of law.
- The civil union of persons in the midst of a dissolution proceeding as of Oct. 1, 2008 will not be converted into a marriage, and the dissolution proceedings will follow their course until conclusion.
- The civil union statutes are repealed as of October 1, 2008.

We have an obligation to support any individual who seeks to formalize their relationship and to provide them equal opportunity to legally protect themselves and their family members. If you have any questions, please contact me at joycehamiltonhenr@democracyworksct.org or at (860) 727-1157.