

Testimony – House Bill 7395
March 25, 2007

Mr. Chairmen and Members of the Committee,

I am Father Ted Tumicki from the Occum section of Norwich. I am a theologian, canon lawyer, and Bishop's Delegate for Safe Environments for the Diocese of Norwich. I am speaking in opposition to House Bill 7395 – An Act Concerning Marriage Equality.

My reasons for opposition are several; however with time constraints I will limit myself to three. First, as an integral part of society, marriage has always included a biological aspect: that is, the procreation and education of children. The proposed bill leaves out this aspect.

A second reason for opposition is the inadequate definition of marriage within the proposed bill. Marriage is a union of different kinds of love, most notably a love of neighbor, as manifested in the genuine and active concern for the well-being of a human being, as well as a sexual procreative love. The present debate and proposed bill tends to separate the two aspects and harms that understanding of marriage. There are already enough marriages failing in society because of the lack of proper understanding and integration without the proposed bill adding to this phenomenon.

A third reason for opposition has to do with the age of eligibility listed in the bill and its references to Statute 46b-30 concerning marriage of minors. In light of the issue of sexual abuse of minors and the existence of organizations such as NAMBLA, the North American Man Boy Love Association, I am shocked that this provision is even included. Organizations such as NAMBLA continually lobby to have the age of consent lowered so that adults ages eighteen and older can engage in sexual activity with minors under the age of eighteen.

The proposed bill continues to allow the possibility of an adult and a minor to marry, thereby engaging in sexual activity with the legal sanction of the State.

My shock deepens and turns to intense questioning when I consider the history of the civil union law as compared with the proposed bill. Legislative transcripts from April of 2005 indicate that the intent of the then proposed bill was to parallel the marriage statutes. In the House debate, an amendment was added to eliminate the exception for minors to enter into a civil union and which passed 126-22.

Our society has learned that anytime an adult engages in sexual activity with a minor, it is abuse. The proposed bill not only allows for abuse to occur but continues to give it legal sanction. Why is the standard for marriage not being raised to the higher standard found in civil union law? Why is the Connecticut General Assembly even considering a bill that would continue to make legal some forms of sexual abuse of minors? In this day and age such a position is unconscionable.

For these reasons I urge you to vote against this proposed bill.