

Connecticut General Assembly  
Judicial Committee Hearing  
On  
HB 7395  
An Act Concerning Marriage Equality

Testimony of Joan P. Haugen  
Cromwell, Connecticut  
March 26, 2007

Mr. Chairmen and members of the committee, my name is Joan Haugen and I am from Cromwell. I appreciate this opportunity to speak before you today regarding HB 7395 - An Act Concerning Marriage Equality. I do not support the passage of this bill.

Let me first recognize the vast complexity of this issue. Furthermore, that those on opposite sides argue from very different worldviews, making it difficult to find resolution in the matter.

While I do not support same-sex marriage, I am not insensitive to the right of gay and lesbian people to form meaningful relationships. Dear friends and relatives of mine are gay. Also, if their concern is securing for themselves the benefits, protections and responsibilities afforded to opposite-sex couples in marriage, then they need look no further than Connecticut's civil union laws (CT Statute Title 46b Chapter 815f Sec. 46b-38m).

It appears, however, that securing these benefits, protections and responsibilities is only a smaller part of a larger strategy to redefine "marriage" and "family" for all citizens and gain broad acceptance of their lifestyle as normal (Michelangelo Signorile, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do" Out, June 1996). I find this unacceptable for two main reasons.

First, marriage has existed as an institution since the beginning of civilization. It is not something that was invented by humans. It was lovingly designed and established by God, not only for the good of the individuals involved, but for the good of humankind. We are foolish to try and tamper with it. Ideally, marriage brings the two different and complimentary sexes, male and female, together into an exclusive, cooperative and committed relationship that provides, among other things, security, companionship and intimacy for the couple. Marriage promotes well-being for those who are married and promotes stability in society.

The true benefits inherent in marriage come only when we live within the boundaries set by its Creator. And...as long as marriage has been around, people of have been messing it up! Humankind's lack of honor, integrity and self-control has done it great damage. Premarital sex, cohabitation, dishonesty, selfishness, adultery, abuse, divorce, etc. have all served to weaken marriage. Also, throughout time legislation has made it easier to

enter and leave marriage. But never before has marriage suffered an attack like this...aiming at its very core. We have to draw the line somewhere.

Could we have imagined 100 years ago that the need to defend marriage between one man and one woman would arise? Surely not! Common sense would have told us, "No!" But here we are!

If this legislation is passed...state by state... what will come in the next 100 years...or less, as change accelerates? If people continue to pursue their personal and, arguably, immoral desires over society's greater common good, what will come next? Where does the argument for personal freedom end? Clearly, freedom and order are out of balance. If we *stand* for anything we will surely *fall*.

Secondly, marriage is not only significant in the legal realm. It is significant in the spiritual realm, as well. It is sacred. My husband and I have been married for 17 ½ years. We not only signed a legal document the day we were married. We made a promise to God and to each other, and entered into a holy union. In addition to practical benefits, this union also acts as a symbol... a living demonstration of the loving, sacrificial relationship that Christ has with His church.

Legalization of same-sex marriage would radically change the traditional and *natural* definition of marriage. It would no longer be special...sacred. It would deny the majority of people, including myself and my own children, the right to be part of a spiritually significant marriage relationship. It would affect public school curriculum. My sons would be taught that homosexuality and same-sex marriage are normal, contrary to our religious beliefs. And finally, our civil right to reject the ideology of homosexuality would be gone. It is already disappearing.

At times I have resented the fact that something as basic, natural and longstanding as marriage between one man and one woman needs to be *defended*. God intended so much more for us within his divine plan for marriage... more than we could ever *take* for ourselves.

I urge you, Mr. Charimen and members of the committee... please don't dilute the significance of marriage as we know it. Draw the line here.

Thank you.