



Susan Bysiewicz
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

**Testimony of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz
Judiciary Committee
March 26, 2007**

For the record, my name is Susan Bysiewicz and I am the Secretary of the State. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to you in support of H.B. #7395.

H.B.# 7395: AN ACT CONCERNING MARRIAGE EQUALITY

As the Chief Elections Official for the State of Connecticut, I have always advocated for the protection of civil rights and equal protection under the law. I fought to ensure equal access to voting for people with disabilities through my support and implementation of the Help America Vote Act, and I advocated for the extension of the National Voting Rights Act to ensure that all citizens are afforded access to voting. Every citizen deserves to be treated equally under the laws of our state, and no one group should be denied rights afforded to others. H.B. # 7395 would provide needed protection.

Connecticut has always been at the forefront of safeguarding civil rights. For example, the landmark case of Griswold v. Connecticut recognized a woman's right to privacy for the first time and laid the groundwork for Roe v. Wade. The Connecticut General Assembly was the first state to codify the protections of Roe v. Wade into state statute. Connecticut was also the first state to approve civil unions without a judicial mandate. I commend this Committee and the General Assembly for its leadership.

Civil unions currently do not guarantee social security, health insurance, pension benefits and other protections afforded to married couples. Civil unions create a separate, and not even equal, category of citizen. We can and we need to do more to ensure that all of our state's citizens are guaranteed equality and equal protection under the law.