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## Testimony in Support of “An Act Concerning Civil Unions”



This is my wife and I at our wedding. Jennifer Moyer (left) Tiffany Moyer-Washington (right)

My name is Tiffany Washington according to my birth certificate and the federal government. My name is Tiffany Moyer-Washington according to my Connecticut Driver’s license and my social circle. And why is it that I have two different names? Well, my name-change is caught in the purgatory of Connecticut civil unions.

On September 22, my partner of three years and I had a ceremony with family and friends in a quaint beach-side wedding in Provincetown. Yet, because we are residents of Connecticut, we had to return to our home-state to be legally bound in a civil union.

As newlyweds we were naïve to the discrepancies between civil unions and marriage. Since we’d read in newspapers and heard on newscasts, when the civil union law first came into being that “civil unions and marriages share the same benefits, protections and responsibilities under the law,” we didn’t prepare for or anticipate any discrimination based on our civil union status. We both innocently assumed that since civil unions were advertised as marriage under a different name, then our rights would be the same as those who are married in this state.

Nonetheless, we had first hand experience that demonstrates civil unions and marriage are not the same when I tried to change my name after my civil union. One such inconsistency between civil unions and

marriage in Connecticut is the process of a legal name change. If you are married in Connecticut, you can show your marriage certificate as proof of a name-change to change your driver's license, social security card, passport, credit cards, etc. without any additional cost or documentation. If you are part of a civil union in Connecticut, you can now show your civil union certificate as proof of a name-change to change your driver's license. However, in order to be able to change your name for any other form of documentation you need proof of a name-change with a \$150 probate court form. After you complete the form and pay the \$150, you are then required to go through the process of changing your name the way a person would for any reason besides marriage and divorce. Then the person who wants to change their name, must appear in court, before a judge, to have their new name approved.

If civil unions and marriage are advertised as the same, then why do I have to pay \$150 and appear before a judge to approve my name change and a friend of mine, who was married a month before me, can change her name without the added cost and hassle?

And most recently, I've encountered the worst kind of confusion due to my half name-change. When I applied for my passport, I was denied because "the identification [I] provided is not sufficient for passport services." In my newly wed bliss, I was so eager to change my last name that I did not look into the inequity of name-changes in Connecticut. So, I have a valid Connecticut driver's license but I don't yet have a form from probate court approving my name-change because I refuse to pay \$150 to be a second-class citizen. As of this moment, I cannot get a passport to go on my honeymoon to Spain this summer.

I pay my taxes, I obey the laws of our state and our country, I vote, and truly believe that I deserve to be treated like an equal, valued citizen. Yet, this discrepancy between civil unions and marriage is creating second-class citizens in Connecticut. I refuse to be told that the back of the bus is just as comfortable as the front of bus. Bill No. 693 is a step in the right direction to grant deserved equality to all Connecticut citizens.

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