

5925

Testimony in Support of "An Act Concerning Civil Unions"



Chairman Lawlor, Chairman MacDonald and members of the Judiciary Committee. I'm here to testify concerning problems my spouse and I have experienced since our Civil Union with respect to bill HB5925. These problems would not have occurred if we were married.

My name is Suzanne Rogers. I am 62 years old and my spouse, Barbara Upton is 55 and unfortunately could not be here today. I am a Registered Nurse and Barb's a Financial Manager for a custom homebuilder. We have been together as a couple going on 32 years.

We had our Civil Union on Oct. 1st, 2005. In Oct. 2006, Barb sustained a severe ankle fracture and I requested a Family Medical Leave from my present employer to care for Barb until surgery could be performed and the fracture stabilized. I was asked to produce a copy of my Civil Union certificate before a leave would be considered, even though it was known by my Directors of Nursing, that I had had a Civil Union.

Several weeks ago, I asked to have Barb put on my dental insurance. Just last Thursday, this actually was accepted and she'll go on as of April 1st, but again, they had to review my Civil Union certificate for proof of our relationship. I have been employed at this same institution for more than 20 years and I found these requests to be discriminatory.

Would a married couple have had to provide their marriage license in this same situation?

In another incident at the beginning of 2007, I requested information from a former employer as to my pension benefits. I was informed that I could leave a portion of my pension to Barb in a 5, 10 or 15 year certified life annuity in the capacity of a beneficiary.

but that I would not be allowed to leave her 50 or 100% in the form of a qualified **joint and survivor** annuity as I could a spouse through marriage. They stated that they would recognize her as my **significant other** while a patient in the hospital, but would not recognize her as my **spouse** in the event of my death.

Barb and I are an international couple who met in 1976 while on vacation. Barb is Canadian, and I am a U.S. citizen. It took more than 10 years and many financial and emotional hardships before Barb was able to become a citizen of this country. Had we been able to marry, I would have been Barb's sponsor and we would not have had to endure such difficult years.

We realize that this situation will take a change in federal law to rectify, but the first step is to be married under state law.

We have found that while we have attained many benefits and protections from our Civil Union, most financial matters are in the realm of RESPONSIBILITIES and few in the sense of EQUALITY or gain.

Proof of our civil union has had to be presented over and over again, and benefits have often been denied. A **Civil Union**, although a step in the right direction, is not **Marriage**.

I thank you for your time and consideration in these matters.

Suzanne Rogers & Barbara Upton
6 Parkview Drive
Avon, CT 06001