

Testimony of Janet Peck and Carol Conklin  
Judiciary Committee, March 6, 2009

**Please Support: SB 899, an Act Implementing the Guarantee of Equal Protections  
Under the Constitution of the State for Same-Sex Couples**

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Janet Peck and I am here today with my wife, Carol Conklin. Carol and I are lifelong Connecticut residents and presently live in Colchester. We were one of the plaintiff couples in the Kerrigan case and are here today in support of SB 899.

33 years ago, Carol and I fell in love and began to share our lives together. For all of those years, we dreamed of getting married. On January 24<sup>th</sup> of this year, our dream came true as Carol and I were joined in marriage surrounded by the love and support of our family and friends. That day will always be one of the happiest days of our lives.

After 33 years, to finally be able to pledge our love and commitment to each other in the way that is honored and celebrated by everyone everywhere felt so amazing, so satisfying and so right.

To me being married means that our 33 year love and commitment to each other is finally recognized and respected by others - that doors that were previous closed to us, are now open and that our future together is a little brighter and more secure.

Carol would say that as a married couple we are no longer on the outside looking in – that we are no longer living outside of what is seen as acceptable or normal – we are now a part of rather than separate from everyone else – we are equal – we are free to be who we are.

Since our marriage, all the wrongs that had been done to us over the years – the disrespect, the discrimination, the lack of recognition for the truth of our love, the pain of not being able to give each other the ultimate gift of love and commitment - the pain of exclusion and invisibility has begun to fade - the wounds have begun to heal.

We can not say that we feel more connected to each other than we were before we married. We have always felt married. But we can say that we feel more connected to everyone else.

In my affidavit to the court as plaintiffs in the Kerrigan case I wrote that “marriage is not just the glue that holds two people together, it is the glue that cements entire families together, generation after generation.” Carol and I no longer live outside of that special family bonding and are now connected to the generations of family who married before us and who will come after us.

We now feel more connected to our deceased parents who taught us the true meaning of marriage and to our family members who joyfully and willingly took an active part in our

ceremony even though many are active members of faith communities that do not support our right to marry.

And we feel more connected to the people of the community where we live whose outpouring of support to us has warmed our hearts and will never be forgotten. After our case was won, people sent us cards of congratulations and would come up to us on the street, in the grocery store and just about everywhere else and extend their hand in congratulations - excitedly asking us the details of our wedding plans.

Many of these people were strangers to us and had simply seen our picture in the paper or read about our story and felt compelled to show their support for our upcoming marriage. Marriage connects us to something greater than ourselves and to others in a way that was not possible before.

As we begin our lives as a married couple, the love that Carol and I have held in our hearts for 33 years finally feels free and at peace and the promise of our love that had its beginnings so many years ago is now complete.

And we feel so fortunate to have been able to marry in the state that we have always called home and proud that Connecticut continues to be a leader on this issue of equality.