

5509

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Raised Bill No. 5009. Joint Committee
on the Judiciary. March 19, 2012

Good afternoon. My name is Charles Crenshaw, and I live in Bloomfield Connecticut. I am almost 68 years old, divorced, working full time, and because of my divorce ruling, I expect to be working full time until my death.

I'm here to support Raised Bill No. 5509 because, among other things, it provides a reasonable end point for alimony.

After my 59th birthday and 24 years of marriage, my wife divorced me. She was working at the time, in good health, the kids were both over 18 and were to continue living with me when she left, and the divorce was entirely her idea. We agreed to no fault divorce.

We decided that we would split our marital assets 50/50, and go our separate ways. When I mentioned that she may have to get a higher paying job in order to support her new lifestyle, she told me, "Oh no. You're going to support me by paying alimony." I was shocked!

My wife was awarded half my 401K savings, half the equity in the house, and half of my retirement benefits. Then to add insult to the injury, she was also awarded a weekly alimony, equivalent to 21% of my salary, which was to continue until my death.

Some call this lifetime alimony; I call it a death sentence. Let me explain. I have to work in order to make the money needed to pay the alimony. I have to pay alimony until my death. Therefore, I have to work until my death. Hence, it's a death sentence.

As a man well past retirement age, why am I not entitled to a financially comfortable retirement after working 44 years in my professional field? Why should I have to work for the rest of my life to support a woman who no longer wants to be my wife, and made the conscientious decision to walk out of my life? My dreams have been shattered, and my heart has been broken, while my wife profits from my years of educational preparation, and decades of hard work.

My ex-wife enjoys the free spirited life style of a single woman; but, continues to reap the financial benefits of being married. On the other hand,

I have none of the benefits of being married, but I continue to suffer from the financial disadvantages of being married. Being financially shackled to my ex-wife, I feel like I am still married.

In closing, divorce is an extremely painful process, as it leaves behind a wake of devastation and pain, especially for the kids, even if they are grown. This pain is compounded by the addition of never ending alimony, which serves as a constant and painful reminder of the divorce. Alimony is like a dagger being thrust into your chest week after week after week. It never allows you to get over the pain of divorce and move on.

Finally, I support Raised Bill No. 5509 because it provides a reasonable end point for alimony, and provides for the termination of alimony when the payer reaches retirement age. I urge and encourage each of you to support this bill.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.