

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL No. 5509

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for your time today. My name is Carrie Maturo and I am a supporter of Connecticut Alimony Reform. I am here today to urge you to support the much-needed alimony reform Bill No. 5509. Connecticut's alimony laws must be updated for today's social and economic conditions. The current laws need structure, guidelines and predictability so that divorces are easier to settle, and we cut down on stress and strife of divorce, especially in the lives of our children.

In my own situation, I am a second wife who has witnessed how these laws foster endless litigation, which have had, and will continue to have, a negative *lifetime* impact on my husband's two children as well as on us. The emotional toll of my husband constantly under the threat of losing his job and the looming threat that I, as a second spouse, may be subjected to pay his alimony payments was terrifying for years. The legal fees accumulated due to calculated delays and unnecessary, frivolous motions have clearly benefited the lawyers and drained our resources so that we are now forced to work into retirement age to rebuild our assets and pay for college educations. Even though I was not a party to my husband's divorce, I personally had to hire my own attorney and spend almost \$9,000 of my own savings to fight an unwarranted subpoena. My role has only been to help care for the children and protect them from this awful mess.

My husband was forced to pay alimony even when his ex wife was cohabiting for years. While alimony is supposed to end with re-marriage or cohabitation, the toll of proving cohabitation under current law required endless litigation, which again harmed the children.

Seeing two beautiful children being forced to live in a home with a live-in boyfriend who is not their step-parent, so their mother won't lose her alimony, has been traumatic for these teenage boys, as have the years of litigation brought about because there are no alimony guidelines. The absence of guidelines creates incentives for litigation. Today's divorce laws are anti-family.

Children have the birth right to a mother and a father and to be raised in a non litigation-fueled environment. It is a disturbing and crushing fact that because of current laws, their parents became embittered adversaries instead of companionable co-parents.

Family attorneys have expressed the view that this bill would be “bad for business.” No business should take precedence over the happiness and health of children and their parents. Destroying families has to STOP BEING A BUSINESS. Providing a SOLUTION to a PROBLEM is the only business.

Bill No. 5509 provides generous alimony with a balance of guidelines and judicial discretion for unusual cases. I believe it’s pro-family, pro-marriage, that it protects alimony payers and alimony recipients, and that it will reduce the emotional and financial costs of divorce for the entire family.

Thank you.