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The Connecticut Council for
Non-Adversarial Divorce

Testimony Concerning Senate Bill 1029, AAC A Non-Adversarial Dissolution of Marriage

Submitted by Louise R. Zito, President

The Connecticut Council for Non-Adversarial Divorce strongly supports the concept of a joint petition for those people desirous of obtaining a dissolution of marriage in a non-adversarial manner. Our members are skilled highly trained professionals who have seen the negative impact of requiring one spouse to sue the other for divorce.

Our concern with Senate Bill 1029 are with the restrictions set forth in section (b), in particular (b) (2)(3)(4)(5) and (6). Under these restrictions very few married couples would be eligible to file a joint petition. The majority of the divorces that our members mediate or collaborate would not be affected by this Bill.

Our members are professionals in the legal, financial and mental health fields. We participate in thousands of divorces a year as mediators, collaborative attorneys, divorce financial planners, parenting coordinators, child specialists, coaches, accountants and financial neutrals. Judges routinely find the Divorce Separation Agreements drafted by our attorneys to be fair and equitable and in the best interests of the parties' children. These Agreements contain provisions for alimony, child support, child custody, division of assets and debt well in excess of \$35,000.00, allocation of pensions and other deferred income, evaluation and division of businesses. Many of our dissolutions involve marriages of duration well over eight years. These dissolutions are carried out without court intervention except for the review of the Agreement on the day of the uncontested dissolution. Why would some of our clients be allowed to file joint petitions and others not?

Our clients do not understand why one of them has to sue the other. The words "Plaintiff" and "Defendant" are loaded terms for those trying to divorce in a peaceable, dignified manner and who do not want their children harmed by litigation.

We believe the joint petition is an important step in support of Non-Adversarial divorce but ask the Judiciary Committee to reconsider the restrictions set forth in paragraph (b).