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FAMILY LAW

March 6, 2020

RE: Raised Bill No. 5178: An Act Concerning Adoption and Implementation of the Connecticut Parentage Act

Dear Chairs Stafstrom and Winfield, Vice Chairs Kasser and Blumenthal, Ranking Members Kissel and Rebimbas, and Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Meghan Freed and I live in Hartford, CT. Together with my wife, Attorney Kristen Marcroft, I founded and manage Freed Marcroft LLC, a Connecticut law firm of eight attorneys who devote their practice exclusively to family law. Freed Marcroft has offices in Hartford and Cheshire.

I graduated from Mount Holyoke College and Western New England College School of Law. I am admitted to practice in Connecticut and before the District of Connecticut and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. I am a board member of the Hartford County Bar Association; a current member and former Chair of the Connecticut Bar Association's LGBT Section; and a national and local commentator on the status of divorce, family law, and laws impacting LGBT+ families.

Today, I would like to go on record in support of the Connecticut Parentage Act (Raised Bill No. 5178) and urge you to report this bill favorably.

Family law for same-sex couples in Connecticut has not kept pace with the needs of LGBT+ families. At Freed Marcroft, we regularly serve LGBT+ clients on issues including second-parent adoption, child custody, and child support. Questions of child custody and support involving LGBT+ families are particularly complex under Connecticut law. Current state law forces some LGBT+ parents to go through the time and expense of formally adopting their own children in order to legally protect their parent-child relationship. Too often, families do not take the legal steps necessary to ensure that both parents have full parental rights as to their children—they, quite understandably, do not realize that the law does not

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treat them as legal parents. They only realize their mistake too late, during a separation, divorce, or upon the death or illness of a partner or spouse.

The Connecticut Parentage Act would move our state's laws toward true equality for all families, including same-sex couples. The proposed Act streamlines and updates Connecticut's parentage law and will help guarantee children in LGBT+ families access to secure and stable relationships. At Freed Marcroft, our LGBT+ clients must already navigate the stressful and time-consuming process of starting a family. The Act's provisions will reduce the current morass of uncertainty that makes it difficult for them to ensure that their new families are fully protected under the law.

Please support and favorably report Raised Bill No. 5178.

Sincerely,



Meghan E. Freed, Esq.