

ASSEMBLY, No. 3685

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 20, 2006

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman REED GUSCIORA

District 15 (Mercer)

Assemblyman MIMS HACKETT, JR.

District 27 (Essex)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblyman JOHN F. MCKEON

District 27 (Essex)

Assemblyman GORDON M. JOHNSON

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex)

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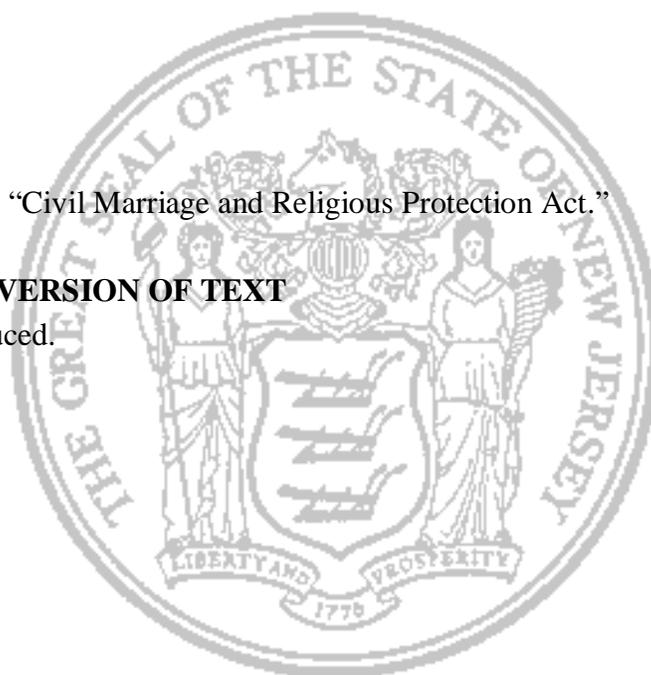
Assemblymen Payne and Stack

SYNOPSIS

Enacts the “Civil Marriage and Religious Protection Act.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/7/2007)

1 AN ACT concerning a legally recognized union of two consenting
2 persons, amending R.S.37:1-1 and R.S.37:1-3 and supplementing
3 Title 37 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. (New section) This act shall be known and may be cited as the
9 “Civil Marriage and Religious Protection Act.”

10
11 2. (New section) It is the intent of the Legislature that this act be
12 interpreted consistently with the guarantees of the First Amendment
13 to the United States Constitution and of Article I, paragraph 4 of the
14 New Jersey Constitution.

15
16 3. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:

17 a. Civil marriage is a legal institution recognized by the State in
18 order to promote stable relationships and to protect individuals who
19 are in those relationships. The institution of marriage also provides
20 important protections for the families of those who are married,
21 including not only any children or other dependents, but also
22 members of their extended families.

23 b. On October 25, 2006, the New Jersey Supreme Court held
24 that denying rights and benefits to any committed couples that are
25 statutorily given to others violates the equal protection guarantee of
26 Article I, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution. The court
27 held that to comply with this constitutional mandate, the Legislature
28 must either amend the marriage statutes to include those couples or
29 create a parallel statutory structure which will provide, on equal
30 terms, the rights and benefits enjoyed and burdens and obligations
31 borne by married couples.

32 c. The exclusion of couples from marriage harms those couples
33 and their families by denying them and their families specific legal
34 rights and responsibilities under State law and by depriving them of
35 a legal basis to challenge federal laws that deny access to the many
36 important federal benefits and obligations provided only to spouses.
37 Those federal benefits include the right to file joint federal income
38 tax returns, the right to sponsor a partner for immigration to the
39 United States, the right to Social Security survivor’s benefits, the
40 right to family and medical leave and many other substantial
41 benefits and obligations.

42 d. New Jersey’s discriminatory exclusion of certain couples
43 from marriage further harms those couples and their families by
44 denying them unique public recognition and affirmation.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 e. The Legislature has an interest in encouraging stable
2 relationships.

3 f. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this bill to end the
4 pernicious practice of marriage discrimination in New Jersey.

5
6 4. (New section) "Marriage" means the legally recognized union
7 of two consenting persons in a committed relationship. Whenever
8 the term "marriage" occurs or the term "man," "woman," "husband"
9 or "wife" occurs in the context of marriage or any reference is made
10 thereto in any law, statute, rule, regulation or order, the same shall
11 be deemed to mean or refer to the union of two persons pursuant to
12 this amendatory and supplementary act.

13
14 5. R.S.37:1-1 is amended to read as follows:

15 37:1-1. Certain marriages prohibited.

16 A man shall not marry any of his ancestors or descendants, or his
17 sister or brother, or the daughter or son of his brother or sister, or
18 the sister or brother of his father or mother, whether such collateral
19 kindred be of the whole or half blood. A woman shall not marry
20 any of her ancestors or descendants, or her brother or sister, or the
21 son or daughter of her brother or sister, or the brother or sister of
22 her father or mother, whether such collateral kindred be of the
23 whole or half blood. A marriage in violation of any of the foregoing
24 provisions shall be absolutely void.

25 (cf: R.S.37:1-1)

26
27 6. R.S.37:1-3 is amended to read as follows:

28 37:1-3. Where license to be obtained.

29 The licensing officer shall issue the license which shall be
30 obtained:

31 a. In the municipality of this state in which **[the female]** either
32 party to the proposed marriage resides; or

33 b. In the municipality in which **[the male party]** one of the
34 parties resides, if the **[female]** other party is a nonresident of this
35 state; or

36 c. In the municipality in which the proposed marriage is to be
37 performed, if both parties are nonresidents of this state.

38 (cf: R.S.37:1-3)

39
40 7. (New section) In addition to the fee for issuing a marriage
41 license authorized pursuant to R.S.37:1-12 and the fee for the
42 Department of Human Services trust fund authorized pursuant to
43 P.L.1981, c.382 (C.37:1-12.1 and C.37:1-12.2), each licensing
44 officer shall collect a fee of \$50 from the applicants which shall be
45 deposited into the General Fund.

46
47 8. (New section) No minister of any religion authorized to
48 solemnize marriage and no religious society, institution or

1 organization in this State shall be required to solemnize any
2 marriage in violation of the free exercise of religion guaranteed by
3 the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or by Article
4 I, paragraph 4 of the New Jersey Constitution.

5
6 9. The Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, pursuant to
7 the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1)
8 shall adopt rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this
9 act.

10
11 10. This act shall take effect on the 90th day following
12 enactment, except that the Commissioner of Health and Senior
13 Services may take such anticipatory administrative action in
14 advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

15
16
17 STATEMENT

18
19 This bill, which would be titled the “Civil Marriage and
20 Religious Protection Act,” is in response to the recent New Jersey
21 Supreme Court decision mandating marriage equality to all
22 consenting couples in the State. The bill provides that it is the
23 intent of the Legislature that the act be interpreted consistently with
24 the guarantees of the First Amendment to the United States
25 Constitution and of Article I, paragraph 4 of the New Jersey
26 Constitution.

27 The bill’s findings and declarations provide that civil marriage is
28 a legal institution recognized by the State in order to promote stable
29 relationships and to protect individuals who are in those
30 relationships. The institution of marriage also provides important
31 protections for the families of those who are married, including not
32 only any children or other dependents, but also members of their
33 extended families.

34 On October 25, 2006, the New Jersey Supreme Court held that
35 denying rights and benefits to any committed couples that are
36 statutorily given to others violates the equal protection guarantee of
37 Article I, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution. The court
38 held that to comply with this constitutional mandate, the Legislature
39 must either amend the marriage statutes to include those couples or
40 create a parallel statutory structure which will provide, on equal
41 terms, the rights and benefits enjoyed and burdens and obligations
42 borne by married couples.

43 The findings and declarations set out in the bill provide further
44 that the exclusion of certain couples from marriage harms them and
45 their families by denying them specific legal rights and
46 responsibilities under State law and by depriving them of a legal
47 basis to challenge federal laws that deny access to the many
48 important federal benefits and obligations provided only to spouses.

1 Those federal benefits include the right to file joint federal income
2 tax returns, the right to sponsor a partner for immigration to the
3 United States, the right to Social Security survivor's benefits, the
4 right to family and medical leave and many other substantial
5 benefits and obligations.

6 The findings and declarations also provide that the Legislature
7 has an interest in encouraging stable relationships.

8 Under the bill, "marriage" would be defined as the legally
9 recognized union of two consenting persons in a committed
10 relationship. The bill provides that whenever the term "marriage"
11 occurs or the term "man," "woman," "husband" or "wife" occurs in
12 the context of marriage or any reference is made thereto in any law,
13 statute, rule, regulation or order, the same shall be deemed to mean
14 or refer to the union of two persons pursuant to the bill.

15 The bill also adds an additional marriage license fee of \$50 for
16 all applicants for marriage. These funds would be deposited in the
17 State General Fund.

18 The bill specifically provides that no minister of any religion
19 authorized to solemnize marriage and no religious society,
20 institution or organization in this State would be required to
21 solemnize any marriage in violation of the free exercise of religion
22 guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States
23 Constitution or by Article I, paragraph 4 of the New Jersey
24 Constitution.