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Massachusetts Men & Women Looking for Alimony Reform

Joint Committee of the Judiciary to hold Hearing at Statehouse; January 24 to Hear Residents Experiences of Lifetime Alimony, Bankruptcy and Jail Time

BOSTON, Jan. 23 /PRNewswire/ -- A growing group of Massachusetts men and women who have formed the group, "Mass Alimony Reform" will get their chance to address the Joint Committee of the Judiciary on Thursday, January 24 at 1:00pm in regards to House Bill # 1567.

The hearing, held in Room A 1 of the State House is meant to provide a forum for Massachusetts residents who have been ordered by the courts for years to provide a lifetime of alimony to their ex-spouses as a result of divorce. The majority of the residents that are scheduled to address the committee regarding alimony reform are women, the second wives of husbands once divorced. Many of these women are forced to share the expense of providing living and other expenses for their present husband's first wives who are unwilling to support themselves. At the present time, the income of the second wife is often used to determine the amount of alimony awarded to the first wife.

It is the position of Massachusetts Alimony Reform not to abolish alimony but to reform the current laws on the books that allow for a lifetime of alimony regardless of personal finances or situations. That, according to the group is unfair.

"We do understand that some ex-spouses need short-term maintenance, help with job training, and temporary support," says co-founder Steve Hitner of Marlborough, "But Massachusetts lifetime alimony laws are bankrupting individuals and putting good people in jail whose only mistake was to have a bad marriage, and get divorced in Massachusetts.

"Also, many people confuse the issue of alimony with child support," states Hitner. "Our group wants to be very clear that our proposed legislation has absolutely nothing to do with the issue of child support. This is strictly legislation to reform the current alimony laws."

According to the group, many Massachusetts residents who have asked the court for a modification of their alimony payments due to personal finances and other legitimate reasons are repeatedly turned down by the Massachusetts Probate Judges as being "not credible."

Men are sent to jail due to personal financial crises, due to the economy and downturn in business, circumstances being totally ignored by some Probate Judges. If an ex-spouse accuses her ex-husband of having money, he is guilty and put into a situation that is impossible to prove

otherwise. The alimony laws need a "Sunset Provision", for the payer, and an incentive for the ex-spouse to support themselves and move on with their lives. The bill to be voted on contains provisions to satisfy that need.

"The current laws in Massachusetts do not provide judges with set guidelines for establishing the amount of alimony one has to pay," says Deb Scanlon of Lynn who plans on addressing the committee. "Judges in this state have full discretion when ordering people to pay alimony and in many cases order people to pay alimony that is far beyond their means. These loose laws drive many Massachusetts residents into bankruptcy and even jail time. It's time the legislature heard our voice."

About Massachusetts Alimony Reform:

Mission of Massachusetts Alimony Reform: "To promote peace and the independence of the parties to divorce, we must amend the alimony laws to clarify guidelines, protect the truly needy and eliminate lifelong marital welfare" <http://www.massalimonyreform.org/>

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