



May 14, 2010

Senator John L. Sampson
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
409 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Re: S. 7740

Dear Senator Sampson,

The National Organization for Women, NYC and its sister organization, the Service Fund of NOW-NYC strongly support the bill before the New York State Senate to amend the Domestic Relations Law and enact post-marital income guidelines. The Service Fund of NOW-NYC is a direct service provider serving 1000 women a year through our Legal clinics and Helpline, and we see first hand every day how the lack of guidelines impoverish New York caregivers and their children.

Establishing the post marital guidelines outlined in S.7740 would help bring economic stability to many New York families upon divorce and reduce the legal costs and court time it now takes to litigate post marital compensation settlements. The current legal maneuvering that is often needed to win fair post marital income awards (currently known as maintenance), often means the non-moneyed spouse in divorce proceedings is forced to abandon a rightful and needed claim of post-divorce funds. Dependent spouses in traditional marriages are particularly prejudiced when maintenance is unavailable. This legislation would provide fairness, consistency, and predictability.

The process of getting a divorce in New York has often, and rightly, been criticized as taking too long and costing too much both in dollars and emotional hardship. The burdens on New Yorkers are considerable, and New York's current laws on maintenance are responsible for a large portion of this burden.

The post-marital income guidelines introduced into the Senate would decrease the time, expense, and trauma of divorce in New York. The benefits to the many clients we see in our office every day, women seeking divorce legal aid, would be tremendous.

The National Organization for Women, NYC and the Service Fund of NOW-NYC urge you to support this very important and over due reform in every way you can.

Sincerely,

Sonia Ossorio
Executive Director
National Organization for Women-NYC
Service Fund of NOW-NYC