

**Know Your Rights.
They are important.
Period.**

The information in this brochure is designed to give you a brief overview of what you should consider prior entering into Civil Union. This information is not a substitute for professional legal advice and does not constitute an attorney/client relationship.

Please visit our website for more information on the rights of same-gender couples and LGBT individuals. The website provides information on the areas of law we practice as well as links to other appropriate websites. Our URL is <http://www.ireneolszewski.com>.

If we can be of service, please do not hesitate to contact us to schedule a consultation.



**Proudly
Serving the
LGBT
Community**



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Law Offices of Irene C. Olszewski, LLC

Client-Focused
Legal Solutions

***Before*
You Enter Into
Civil Union
In Connecticut**



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Before Entering Into Civil Union in Connecticut...

Before you and your partner enter into a Civil Union in Connecticut, you should be aware of several important factors. Civil Union is a legal status that is NOT for every couple, for a variety of critical reasons. If you and/or your partner are:

- *planning to adopt a child;*
- *in the military;*
- *planning to move to another state; or*
- *the recipient(s) of certain entitlement/benefit programs;*

entering into Civil Union may NOT be advisable and may actually be detrimental. Civil Union will grant you the same State rights, benefits and protections granted to married heterosexual couples — but it will not extend the same Federal rights, benefits and protections that heterosexual couples enjoy. A licensed attorney can help you determine if Civil Union is appropriate for you based upon your personal circumstances. If you DO choose Civil Union, there are a variety of legal documents that may be advisable for you and your partner to execute before and after entering into Civil Union. The following are some examples.

◇ PRE-CIVIL UNION AGREEMENT

Prior to entering into Civil Union, couples should consider executing an agreement that specifically sets forth how each person's individual and jointly held assets will be distributed in the event of a break-up (dissolution). Examples include retirement plans, real estate, bank accounts and per-

sonal items acquired before and during the Civil Union. Civil Union is a *legal status* that can only be dissolved by the Court. Please be sure you understand Civil Union's legal ramifications before you take that important step.

What Other Documents May Be Needed?

Whether or not you choose to enter into Civil Union, there are specific legal documents that may be important for you and your partner to execute. The following are some examples:

◇ WILLS & TRUSTS

If you die without a Will, the Probate statutes will control the distribution of your estate. If you wish to choose the way your real estate and/or personal property will be distributed upon your death, a Will might be the appropriate legal vehicle. In some cases, depending upon your assets and their value, related tax consequences, and/or specific circumstances and objectives, a Trust may be the appropriate legal vehicle by which to achieve a desired result. It is important to explore your estate planning options with a licensed attorney.

◇ CO-PARENT ADOPTION

If you and your partner plan to have a child together and you will not be the biological parent of that child, it may be in your family's best interest for you to legally adopt the child, in order to create your own parental rights. The State of Connecticut allows co-parent adoption. It is important to consult a licensed attorney to guide you through the co-parent adoption process.

◇ POWER OF ATTORNEY

A Power of Attorney allows your partner (or other trusted person over the age of 18) to manage your affairs if you are unable to do so for any reason. Banking transactions, pension funding, and real estate transactions are just a few functions that you may designate to your Attorney-in-Fact by way of a valid Power of Attorney.

◇ ADVANCED DIRECTIVES/HEALTH CARE REPRESENTATIVE

Advanced Directives allow you to choose which life support measures you wish to have administered if your medical situation warrants it. The person named as your Health Care Representative will have the authority to make medical decisions for you when you are unable to do so.

◇ DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATOR

Should a conservator of your person become necessary, due to mental incompetence such as traumatic brain injury or dementia, you can designate the person of your choosing to act as your conservator, rather than leave the decision up to the Court.

For More Information...

Visit <http://www.ireneolszewski.com> or call (860) 432-7293 for a consultation. Civil Union is a serious step and it is important for you and your partner to understand the benefits and consequences before entering into this legal relationship.