
**Juvenile Justice & Family Law
Committee**

HB 1171

Brief Description: Limiting the court's discretion concerning denial of dissolution decrees.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Moeller, Cody, Roberts, Schual-Berke, Appleton, Morrell, Darneille, Chase, Kenney and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits the court from denying a petition for dissolution of marriage based on the petitioner's pregnancy.

Hearing Date: 2/4/05

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133).

Background:

In Washington, the word "divorce" has been replaced by the term "dissolution." Washington is a "no-fault" state, which means that either spouse may ask the court to dissolve the marriage by stating that the marriage is "irretrievably broken." The other party can delay, but not stop, the dissolution by alleging that the marriage is not irretrievably broken.

To start a dissolution proceeding, one spouse must file with the court a summons and petition for dissolution of marriage. If the other party joins in the petition or does not deny that the marriage is irretrievably broken, the court may enter a decree of dissolution 90 days after the petition for dissolution of marriage has been filed with the court. The decree of dissolution legally terminates the marriage and makes provisions for the parenting of minor children, family support, and the division of property and liabilities.

Summary of Bill:

HB 1171 prohibits a court from using the petitioner's pregnancy as a basis for denying a decree of dissolution. It also prohibits a court from continuing the matter on that basis.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.