

SENATE BILL NO. 283—SENATORS PARKS; AND COFFIN

MARCH 16, 2009

Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor

SUMMARY—Revises provisions governing the rights of domestic partners. (BDR 11-1100)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: No.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to domestic relations; providing for the registration and dissolution of domestic partnerships in the State of Nevada; setting forth the rights and responsibilities attendant to such partnerships; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

This bill establishes a domestic partnership as a new type of civil contract recognized in the State of Nevada. Under the provisions of this bill, with certain exceptions, domestic partners have the same rights, protections, benefits, responsibilities, obligations and duties as do parties to any other civil contract created pursuant to title 11 of NRS. This bill also clarifies that a domestic partnership is not a marriage for the purposes of **Section 21** of Article 1 of the Nevada Constitution.

Section 8 of this bill sets forth that no public or private employer in this State is required to provide health care benefits to or for the domestic partner of an officer or employee. **Section 8** also clarifies that any public or private employer in this State may voluntarily provide health care benefits to or for the domestic partner of an officer or employee upon such terms and conditions as the affected parties may deem appropriate.



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THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Title 11 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new chapter to consist of the provisions set forth as sections 2 to 13, inclusive, of this act.

Sec. 2. *This chapter may be cited as the Nevada Domestic Partnership Act.*

Sec. 3. *As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined in sections 4 and 5 of this act have the meanings ascribed to them in those sections.*

Sec. 4. *“Domestic partners” means persons who:*

1. Have registered a valid domestic partnership pursuant to section 6 of this act; and

2. Have not terminated that domestic partnership pursuant to section 9 of this act.

Sec. 5. *“Domestic partnership” means the social contract between two persons that is described in section 6 of this act.*

Sec. 6. *1. A valid domestic partnership is registered in the State of Nevada when two persons who satisfy the requirements of subsection 2:*

(a) File with the Office of the Secretary of State, on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State, a signed and notarized statement declaring that both persons:

(1) Have chosen to share one another’s lives in an intimate and committed relationship of mutual caring; and

(2) Desire of their own free will to enter into a domestic partnership; and

(b) Pay to the Office of the Secretary of State a reasonable filing fee established by the Secretary of State, which filing fee must not exceed the total of an amount set by the Secretary of State to estimate:

(1) The cost incurred by the Secretary of State to issue the Certificate described in subsection 3; and

(2) Any other associated administrative costs incurred by the Secretary of State.

↪ The Office of the Secretary of State shall account for the fees received pursuant to paragraph (b) separately, and use those fees, and any interest and income earned on those fees, solely to pay for expenses related to administering the registration of domestic partnerships pursuant to this chapter, including, without limitation, the cost of materials and technology necessary to process and record the filing.



2. To be eligible to register pursuant to subsection 1, two persons desiring to enter into a domestic partnership must furnish proof satisfactory to the Office of the Secretary of State that:

(a) Both persons have a common residence;

(b) Except as otherwise provided in section 10 of this act, neither person is married or a member of another domestic partnership;

(c) The two persons are not related by blood in a way that would prevent them from being married to each other in this State;

(d) Both persons are at least 18 years of age; and

(e) Both persons are competent to consent to the domestic partnership.

3. The Office of the Secretary of State shall issue a Certificate of Registered Domestic Partnership to persons who satisfy the requirements of this section.

4. As used in this section:

(a) "Common residence" means a residence shared by both domestic partners on at least a part-time basis, irrespective of whether:

(1) Ownership of the residence or the right to occupy the residence is in the name of only one of the domestic partners; and

(2) One or both of the domestic partners owns or occupies an additional residence.

(b) "Residence" means any house, room, apartment, tenement or other building, vehicle, vehicle trailer, semitrailer, house trailer or boat designed or intended for occupancy as a residence.

Sec. 7. 1. Except as otherwise provided in section 8 of this act:

(a) Domestic partners have the same rights, protections and benefits, and are subject to the same responsibilities, obligations and duties under law, whether derived from statutes, administrative regulations, court rules, government policies, common law or any other provisions or sources of law, as are granted to and imposed upon spouses.

(b) Former domestic partners have the same rights, protections and benefits, and are subject to the same responsibilities, obligations and duties under law, whether derived from statutes, administrative regulations, court rules, government policies, common law or any other provisions or sources of law, as are granted to and imposed upon former spouses.

(c) A surviving domestic partner, following the death of the other partner, has the same rights, protections and benefits, and is subject to the same responsibilities, obligations and duties under law, whether derived from statutes, administrative regulations,



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1 court rules, government policies, common law or any other
2 provisions or sources of law, as are granted to and imposed upon a
3 widow or a widower.

4 (d) The rights and obligations of domestic partners with
5 respect to a child of either of them are the same as those of
6 spouses. The rights and obligations of former or surviving
7 domestic partners with respect to a child of either of them are the
8 same as those of former or surviving spouses.

9 (e) To the extent that provisions of Nevada law adopt, refer to
10 or rely upon provisions of federal law in a way that otherwise
11 would cause domestic partners to be treated differently from
12 spouses, domestic partners must be treated by Nevada law as if
13 federal law recognized a domestic partnership in the same manner
14 as Nevada law.

15 (f) Domestic partners have the same right to
16 nondiscriminatory treatment as that provided to spouses.

17 (g) A public agency in this State shall not discriminate against
18 any person or couple on the basis or ground that the person is a
19 domestic partner rather than a spouse or that the couple are
20 domestic partners rather than spouses.

21 (h) The provisions of this chapter do not preclude a public
22 agency from exercising its regulatory authority to carry out laws
23 providing rights to, or imposing responsibilities upon, domestic
24 partners.

25 (i) Where necessary to protect the rights of domestic partners
26 pursuant to this chapter, gender-specific terms referring to
27 spouses must be construed to include domestic partners.

28 (j) For the purposes of the statutes, administrative regulations,
29 court rules, government policies, common law and any other
30 provision or source of law governing the rights, protections and
31 benefits, and the responsibilities, obligations and duties of
32 domestic partners in this State, as effectuated by the provisions of
33 this chapter, with respect to:

34 (1) Community property;

35 (2) Mutual responsibility for debts to third parties;

36 (3) The right in particular circumstances of either partner
37 to seek financial support from the other following the dissolution
38 of the partnership; and

39 (4) Other rights and duties as between the partners
40 concerning ownership of property,

41 ↪ any reference to the date of a marriage shall be deemed to refer
42 to the date of registration of the domestic partnership.

43 2. As used in this section, "public agency" means an agency,
44 bureau, board, commission, department or division of the State of
45 Nevada or a political subdivision of the State of Nevada.



1 **Sec. 8. 1.** *The provisions of this chapter do not require a*
2 *public or private employer in this State to provide health care*
3 *benefits to or for the domestic partner of an officer or employee.*

4 2. *Subsection 1 does not prohibit any public or private*
5 *employer from voluntarily providing health care benefits to or for*
6 *the domestic partner of an officer or employee upon such terms*
7 *and conditions as the affected parties may deem appropriate.*

8 **Sec. 9. 1.** *Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2,*
9 *domestic partners who wish to terminate a domestic partnership*
10 *registered pursuant to section 6 of this act must follow the*
11 *procedures set forth in chapter 125 of NRS.*

12 2. *If a domestic partnership meets the criteria specified in*
13 *subsection 3, domestic partners in a domestic partnership*
14 *registered pursuant to section 6 of this act may terminate the*
15 *domestic partnership by:*

16 (a) *Filing with the Office of the Secretary of State, on a form*
17 *prescribed by the Secretary of State, a signed and notarized*
18 *statement declaring that both persons have chosen of their own*
19 *free will to terminate the domestic partnership; and*

20 (b) *Paying to the Office of the Secretary of State a reasonable*
21 *filing fee established by the Secretary of State, which filing fee*
22 *must not exceed the total of any administrative costs incurred by*
23 *the Secretary of State.*

24 3. *For a domestic partnership to qualify for the simplified*
25 *termination proceedings set forth in subsection 2, all of the*
26 *following conditions must exist at the time of the filing pursuant to*
27 *that subsection:*

28 (a) *The domestic partnership has been registered for 5 years or*
29 *less.*

30 (b) *There are no minor children of the relationship of the*
31 *parties born before or during the domestic partnership or adopted*
32 *by the parties during the domestic partnership and no female*
33 *member of the domestic partnership, to her knowledge, is*
34 *pregnant, or the parties have executed an agreement as to the*
35 *custody of any children and setting forth the amount and manner*
36 *of their support.*

37 (c) *There is no community or joint property or the parties have*
38 *executed an agreement setting forth the division of community*
39 *property and the assumption of liabilities of the community, if any,*
40 *and have executed any deeds, certificates of title, bills of sale or*
41 *other evidence of transfer necessary to effectuate the agreement.*

42 (d) *The parties waive any rights to support or the parties have*
43 *executed an agreement setting forth the amount and manner of*
44 *support.*



1 (e) The parties waive any right to the conduct of more
2 comprehensive proceedings pursuant to chapter 125 of NRS.

3 **Sec. 10.** A legal union of two persons, other than a marriage
4 as recognized by the Nevada Constitution, that was validly formed
5 in another jurisdiction, and that is substantially equivalent to a
6 domestic partnership as defined in this chapter, must be
7 recognized as a valid domestic partnership in this State regardless
8 of whether the union bears the name of a domestic partnership.
9 For a legal union that was validly formed in another jurisdiction
10 to be recognized as a valid domestic partnership in this State, the
11 parties desiring such recognition must comply with the provisions
12 of section 6 of this act.

13 **Sec. 11.** A domestic partnership is not a marriage for the
14 purposes of Section 21 of Article 1 of the Nevada Constitution.

15 **Sec. 12.** The provisions of this chapter do not require the
16 performance of any solemnization ceremony to enter into a
17 binding domestic partnership contract. It is left to the dictates and
18 conscience of partners entering into a domestic partnership to
19 determine whether to seek a ceremony or blessing over the
20 domestic partnership and to the dictates of each religious faith to
21 determine whether to offer or allow a ceremony or blessing of
22 domestic partnerships. Providing recognition to partnerships
23 through a domestic partnership system in no way interferes with
24 the right of each religious faith to choose freely to whom to grant
25 the religious status, sacrament or blessing of marriage under the
26 rules or practices of that faith.

27 **Sec. 13.** The provisions of this chapter must be construed
28 liberally to the effect of resolving any doubt or question in favor of
29 finding that a domestic partnership is a valid civil contract entitled
30 to be treated in all respects under the laws of this State as any
31 other civil contract created pursuant to title 11 of NRS would be
32 treated.

