UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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MARY JO KNELLY and	:	
DAVID HUGGINS-DAINES,	:	
	:	
Plaintiffs,	:	
	:	
v.	:	CIVIL ACTION
	:	NO. 07-1272
EILEEN WAGNER, Register of Wills	:	
For Allegheny County (in her individual	:	
And official capacities),	:	ELECTRONICALLY
	:	FILED
Defendant.	:	
	_:	

Temporary Restraining Order

CONTI, District Judge.

This Court having reviewed the parties' briefs and having heard oral argument, it is on this 27th day of September, 2007, ORDERED that Plaintiffs' Motion for Temporary Restraining Order and/or Preliminary Injunction be, and hereby is GRANTED, and in support thereof this Court finds as follows:

1. Plaintiffs are likely to prevail on their argument that the Marriage Act, 23 Pa.C.S. § 1501 *et seq*, permits as a matter of statute the issuance of self-uniting marriage licenses whether the marriage is to be solemnized by the parties in a religious or secular ceremony, as recognized by at least five learned treatises on Pennsylvania marriage law written since 1953. Self-uniting marriage licenses have been issued in Pennsylvania under the statute in question for decades, without regard to the religious or nonreligious affiliations of the parties seeking the licenses. 2. Plaintiffs will suffer irreparable harm unless this Court grants the requested relief. Plaintiffs' marriage ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, September 29, 2007. Under the circumstances of this case, plaintiffs have established that they would suffer irreparable harm warranting the issuance of this order.

3. The Court finds that Defendant will not suffer irreparable harm if the requested injunction issues. Defendant has stipulated that until a few years ago self-uniting licenses were issued without regard to religious affiliation and that as recently as June 2007 at least one couple had managed to secure a self-uniting marriage license without proof of religious affiliation.

4. In light of the strong public policy of Pennsylvania favoring marriage, the Court finds that it is in the public interest to allow for the Plaintiffs' marriage ceremony to proceed as planned and that the ceremony be preceded by the Defendant's issuance of a self-uniting marriage license.

5. The four criteria required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 65 having been satisfied, this Court hereby ORDERS Defendant to forthwith issue a marriage license under 23 Pa.S.C.A. § 1502 to Plaintiffs.

6. The parties shall meet and confer to determine whether any remaining issues raised in this action can be resolved by agreement. The parties shall file a joint status report with this Court within thirty (30) days.

By the Court

<u>/s/ Joy Flowers Conti</u> United States District Judge

Cc: Counsel of record