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## Battle rages over no-fault divorce

Gall Ritchey, a Milford mother, told state lawmakers openly: "I did not want this divorce. The law needs to be more supportive of

needs to be more supportive of marriage.

She was among 11 men and women supporting a bill to make it tougher for married couples with minor children to divorce, her son killed her ex-husband.

Countered Nancy Jean Blisa, representing Michigan's NOW (National Organization for Women): "The state cannot force people to stay in love.

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"This bill will have unintended consequences — more taxes for our overburdened court system; a burden on the poor and middle class; more money for lawyers and leas for living expenses, asil Billsa, one of seven opposed to tightening Michigan's no-fault di-

vorce law.

Eighteen people spoke Monday (March 13) before a state House Judiciary subcommittee in the Farmington Hills City Hall on a bill by Rep. Jessie Dalman, R.-Holland. Her bill would require couples with minor children to go through the pre-1972 "fault" divorce system.

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Of seven opposed to Dalman's bill, five were attorneys and one a psychologist. Of 11 in favor, only one was an attorney.

Dalman, noting the split, aummed it up: "The professional system is not working for the av-erage person."

Worst nightmare

On one point, nearly everyone agreed. As Wilms Fellman, a West Bloomfield educator and divorced mother, put it: "It (divorce) can't be called easy by any stretch of the imagination. It's the

stretch of the imagination. It's the worst nightmare anyone could go through."

Dalman's bill was the work of Michigan Family Forum, a rightwing group previously best known for fighting state school curriculum laws. Its pamphlet is entitled "Breaking Up is Easy to Do." Author Briant Williats wrote that Michigan's 40,000 divorces a year (two-fiths of all first marriages) result in an "economic free-fail" for women and children, power, kids dropping out of school, suicide and a host of social problems.

The MFF-Dalman remedy: House Bill 4432, requiring one party to allege the other committed adulary or engaged in "deviate sexual intercourse," was physically incompetent at the time of marriage, has been sentenced to prison for three years or more, deserted for two years or more, desirted for two years or more, white the sexual terms of the sexu

## Other ideas

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Many — both supporters and opponents of the Dalman bill — did have other ideas: a separate family Court, mandated instruction on parenting, mandated counseling, better training for lawyers, and guardians ad litem for all children in a discore.

Family court — "Personally, I'm in favor," said Michael Robins, Birmingham attorney whechairs the Michigan Bar's family law section. Many judges "shove off cases to mediators, arbitrators, Many have never tried a discore and the said of the country of of the co

NOW's Nancy Bliss agreed.

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"Judges hold a low opinion of domestic cases. Friend of the Court is totally disorganized; the judge tubber-stamps their work. A judge never even hears these cases."

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Wilma Fellman West Bloomfield educator

hitter divorce case, labelled "rubblah" the lawyers' notion that "courts would be clogged" if divorce were made more difficult under Dalman's bill. "It's the child that counts," he said.

Mark and Betty Squier, a Fraser couple who almost divorced, advocated Retrouvaille, where volunteer couples and a Catholic priest lead a weekend program and six later meetings to "help couples put the pieces back together and rebuild loving relationships." Participating couples are asked for a donation.

El Lawyers' training — "Our prefession is not trained to the sensitivities of maintaining the family, We're trained to be warriors, said James Elisman, a scripture-quoting attorney from Birmingham who would prefer to allow almost no divorces.

From the opposite end of the political spectrum, Elsman was joined by NOWs Blits, who advocated "separate licensing of attorney in family leader of a gun owners group who denounced both the political right and left, had a dif-

ferent view "Attorneys profit from the misery of divorce. To the extent you can get attorneys and doctors out of divorce, you should do so."

do so."

Suddians ad litem — "A child is not represented in divorce court," said stormy Piaman, proposing "a guardian ad litem for each child under ago."

"Guardian ad litem is a great idea, "and Margaret Cotant, said thorney with the Oskiand Livington Legal Ald in Fontier," but never fool yourself into thinking you'll get enough volunters."

toers."
Several people who had been unwilling participants in divorce called Dalman's bill the best so-

unwilling participants in divorce called Dalman's bill the best solution.

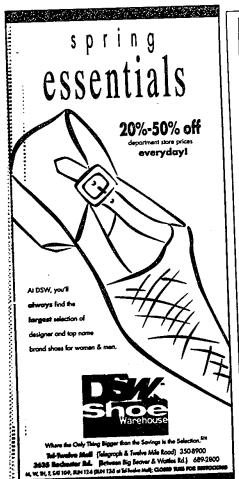
"State officials are too willing to dissolve marriage and collectivize the costs," said "average citizen" Michelle Meadows of Southfield.

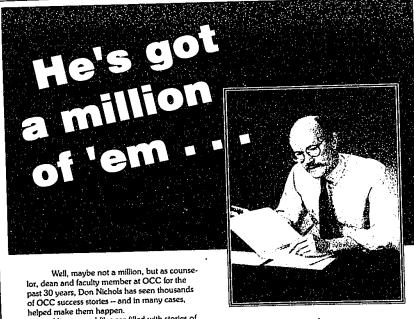
"I've seen many second marriages where the woman said her first husband was better," said Shirley Hobbs, a nurse in two prisons at Coldwater, "When the lawyers realized what our incomes were, they pumped us all the harder."

Joan Martineau, a Plymouth resident who said her husband "walked out the door" after 35 years of marriage and no arguments, said the loss of income has cost her her house while her exhusband, now remarried, is buying his fourth new car in seven years.

Refer to House Bill 4432 when writing to your state representative, State Copitol, Lansing 48999.

## sudge never even heart these cases. B Parenting classes — "You got a lot of people out there who think marriage is a joke," said David Hagood of Detroit. "You oughts make it hard," said Farmington Hills psychologist Lyle Danuloff. "Parents are overwhelmed by life." Danuloff challenged MFF's conclusion that the soaring divorce rate is caused by no-fault divorce. He proposed mandated instruction on parenting and rester mentel health services. S Counseling — Attorney Robins praised Oakland County's "Smile" program, in which is program, in which a judge and social worker spend 45 minutes with couples in divorce cases, showing a videctape in which kirds tell "what divorce did to me." His conclusions. "Some marriages are santable." E upene Ludwig of Troy also any ported mandatory counseling, aupported mandatory counseling. A grandfather whose son is in a series of the new son work and between the substance of sum owners the substance of sum owners that the museum. The afghans come in three colonials aupported mandatory counseling. A grandfather whose son is in a series and between a cost ter her to cost the later to contend to contend to sum of the part of our owners returned automatic title. The sum of the su





His personal files are filled with stories of students whose lives have been changed by the college, and to Dr. Nichols, that makes it all worthwhile.

'Oakland Community College truly meets the needs of students no matter where they are or where they come from. And that's the element that gives me, and all of us at OCC, a great deal of pride."



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