

Speech on House Bill 1110 – Clarify/Alienation of Affection/Criminal Conversation

Delivered to the Senate Judiciary I Committee

by Rev. Mark Creech, executive director

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Rev. Mark Creech, executive director of the Christian Action League.

This room today is full of lawmakers who are indeed astute with regards to all things pertaining to the law. But it was my privilege to serve as a pastor for twenty years before taking my current position, which I have had for the last ten years. And today I still serve a small rural church in Johnston County as an interim pastor. You may have expertise in matters of a judicial nature, but I have specialized in matters of the heart.

I need not lecture you with respect to the importance of the institution of marriage. You well know it. The mountain of social science research tells us that marriage is our most valuable community treasure.

Legislation and public policy is always about sustaining and protecting those things we value most in our culture. And we sustain and protect them with laws commensurate with our zeal for them. If this is true, then it seems to me that this proposed measure indicates a lack of passion for what we say we esteem so much – what we contend is so vital to the preservation of our society.

As a minister and counselor of hurting couples – those who have separated and are about to throw away the most precious thing in their lives – their marriage – most couples, unfortunately, are more often looking for a way out and not a way through. What they need is time to cool off – time to think – time to talk – time to seek help – time to consider how a decision to end their marriage will not only affect them but others in their life and society in general. And they will not be able to do that effectively if someone else is interfering in their marriage – before or after they are separated – especially if that interference is adulterous in nature.

Granted, this legislation spares these two torts of alienation of affection and criminal conversation. But it does nothing to zealously give marriages a fighting chance after separation, which for most

couples is the most critical time, if redemption of the marriage is to occur.

So as a pastor, I urge you today to give marriages a better chance at survival. Allow these two torts to continue to protect the institution from adulterous influences after separation. The extent to which we extend these two torts beyond separation - when marriages are most vulnerable - demonstrates how serious, I believe, we truly are with protecting our most valued community treasure.