

LAW OFFICES
TELLER AND KELLER
730 UNITED PENN BANK BUILDING
WILKES-BARRE, PA. 18701

STEPHEN A. TELLER
WILLIAM R. KELLER
JONATHAN C. TELLER

AREA CODE 717
TELEPHONES: 822-6138
822-5168
(LUZERNE COUNTY)

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Dear Abby:

Your column appearing in The Times Leader, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., April 24, 1978, misquotes the law incorrectly in every aspect.

Social Security Laws: A divorced woman married to her husband for more than twenty years receives full social security benefits, just as though she were married to him at the time when he receives social security benefits. In fact, the social security law recently had to be amended to give men equal rights with women.

Divorce Law: In Pennsylvania, the State Constitution was amended in 1967 giving women equal rights with men. It was the same Equal Rights Amendment that is proposed to the Federal Constitution. The divorce law is exactly the same for men as it is for women.

Property Tax Law: You state, "In all fifty states..." This is not correct. Property owned by husband and wife in Pennsylvania passes to the surviving spouse, tax exempt, free of administration costs, and even the deed is not changed. If the property stands in the name of the husband or of the wife, it passes by intestacy, if there is no Will, or by the Will. The tax is 6% on the net estate, whether the beneficiary be the husband or wife.

Physical Abuse: Pennsylvania has a new statute, effective in 1977, called "The Family Abuse Law". I filed the first three cases in this county, and of the three, two were filed on behalf of the husbands whose wives were beating and abusing them.

Negligent Injury: Both wife and husband have an equal cause of action for loss of consortium in Pennsylvania.

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Dear Abby (Continued):

Alimony: We have never had alimony in Pennsylvania. We do have support laws for support prior to a decree in divorce. The support law applies equally to men and women. I have recently represented a number of men who have compelled their wives to support them. The law applies equally to men and women. If the wife is working and the husband is not, the wife must support the husband, and vice versa.

In conclusion, prior to the Constitutional Amendment of 1967 granting equal rights to women, a lawyer representing the husband was always hesitant in filing suit against the wife for divorce because the husband was usually compelled to pay her counsel fees and costs. Since the adoption in 1967 of the Equal Rights Amendment in Pennsylvania, a husband may now ask his wife to pay his counsel fees and costs in a divorce action and I have done this a number of times, compelling the wife to pay me as attorney for the husband, the costs and expenses of the divorce proceeding.

Yours truly,

Stephen A. Teller

Pennsylvania Lawyer