

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**OFFICIAL CODE**

**TITLE 22.**  
**CRIMINAL OFFENSES AND PENALTIES.**

**CHAPTER 5.**  
**BIGAMY.**

**2001 Edition**

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# CHAPTER 5. BIGAMY.

## § 22-501. BIGAMY.

(a) Whoever, having a spouse or domestic partner living, marries or enters a domestic partnership with another shall be deemed guilty of bigamy, and on conviction thereof shall suffer imprisonment for not less than 2 nor more than 7 years; provided, that this section shall not apply to any person whose:

- (1) Spouse or domestic partner has been continually absent for 5 successive years next before such marriage or domestic partnership without being known to such person to be living within that time;
- (2) Marriage to said living spouse shall have been dissolved by a valid decree of a competent court, or shall have been pronounced void by a valid decree of a competent court on the ground of the nullity of the marriage contract; or
- (3) Domestic partnership with said living domestic partner has been terminated in accordance with § 32-702(d).

(b) For the purposes of this section, the term:

- (1) "Domestic partner" shall have the same meaning as provided in § 32- 701(3).
- (2) "Domestic partnership" shall have the same meaning as provided in § 32- 701(4).

(Mar. 3, 1901, 31 Stat. 1331, ch. 854, § 870; Sept. 12, 2008, D.C. Law 17- 231, § 23(a), 55 DCR 6758.)

### *HISTORICAL AND STATUTORY NOTES*

#### *Prior Codifications*

1981 Ed., § 22-601.

1973 Ed., § 22-601.

#### *Effect of Amendments*

D.C. Law 17-231 rewrote the section, which had read as follows:

"Whoever, having a husband or wife living, marries another shall be deemed guilty of bigamy, and on conviction thereof shall suffer imprisonment for not less than 2 nor more than 7 years; provided, that this section shall not apply to any person whose husband or wife has been continually absent for 5 successive years next before such marriage without being known to such person to be living within that time, or whose marriage to said living husband or wife shall have been dissolved by a valid decree of a competent court, or shall have been pronounced void by a valid decree of a competent court on the ground of the nullity of the marriage contract."

#### *Legislative History of Laws*

Law 17-231, the "Omnibus Domestic Partnership Equality Amendment Act of 2008", was introduced in Council and assigned Bill No. 17-135, which was referred to the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary. The Bill was adopted on first and second readings on April 1, 2008, and May 6, 2008, respectively. Signed by the Mayor on June 6, 2008, it was assigned Act No. 17-403 and transmitted to both Houses of Congress for its review. D.C. Law 17-231 became effective on September 12, 2008.