

Blog

Pennsylvania Reduces No-Fault Divorce Waiting Period to 1 Year

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by Jeffrey M. Williams

The waiting period for a no-fault divorce in Pennsylvania will be cut in half, from two years to one, thanks to House Bill 380, which Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf signed into law on Oct. 4, 2016. The law, Act 102, will go into effect in 60 days.

The Pennsylvania Bar Association and leading family law attorneys across the state, including those of us here at Williams Family Law, supported this bill throughout the legislative debate and worked tirelessly to see it enacted. We have maintained from the start that cutting the waiting time for a no-fault divorce in half is beneficial to all parties impacted by a divorce, enabling everyone, the spouses and the children, to get on with their new lives more quickly.

Pennsylvania House members agreed, and approved the bill overwhelmingly in November 2015. After long legislative negotiations, the Pennsylvania Senate passed the bill on Sept. 26, 2016, and it was then presented to Gov. Wolf. The Bucks County divorce attorneys at Williams Family Law join the Pennsylvania Bar Association in lauding the bill's passage.

What does this change in Pennsylvania divorce law mean for couples who are contemplating a split? In general, we can answer one of the biggest questions we have been hearing from clients: will the new law affect a divorce that is already in progress? The answer is no. The law is not retroactive, so divorce complaints that were filed before the law goes into effect would be processed under the two-year waiting period.

For couples still thinking about a divorce, however, filing a complaint after the law goes into effect in December may be a good course of action. Of course, each situation is different, so for individual legal counsel, please contact one of the Bucks County divorce lawyers at 215-340-2207.

