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2024 Edition

Legal Separation in Connecticut

A Guide to Resources in the Law Library

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This guide links to advance release opinions on the Connecticut Judicial Branch website **and to case law hosted on Google Scholar and Harvard's Case Law Access Project.** The online versions are for informational purposes only.

References to online legal research databases refer to in-library use of these databases. Remote access is not available.

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<https://www.jud.ct.gov/policies.htm>

Introduction

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- "A decree of legal separation shall have the effect of a decree dissolving the marriage except that neither party shall be free to marry." **Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b-67(c)** (2023).
- **"The plaintiff filed for legal separation on May 11, 2001, on the ground of irretrievable breakdown. The defendant filed a cross complaint for dissolution of the parties' marriage. On October 15, 2002, the court rendered judgment dissolving the marriage."** [Raso v. Raso](#), 92 Conn. App. 678, 680, 886 A.2d 863 (2005).
- "The plaintiff . . . commenced this action for a legal separation and other relief by a complaint dated May 23, 2005. A copy of the writ of summons and complaint was served in hand on the defendant on May 24, 2005. The defendant did not file an appearance, and the matter was placed on the uncontested list for January 26, 2006. On January 26, 2006, the plaintiff appeared and filed a motion to amend her complaint, requesting a dissolution of the marriage rather than a legal separation. The defendant did not appear at the hearing, and a judgment of dissolution was rendered by the court...." [Berzins v. Berzins](#), 105 Conn. App. 648, 650, 938 A.2d 1281 (2008).
- "In this issue of first impression, we are called on to determine whether the involuntary conservators of a conserved person can respond to an action for legal separation filed against the conserved person by filing an answer and cross complaint seeking a dissolution of marriage on behalf of the conserved person. We answer that question in the affirmative and, therefore, reverse the judgment of the trial court dismissing this cross complaint." [Luster v. Luster](#), 128 Conn. App. 259, 260, 17 A.3d 1068 (2011).
- "In *Szot v. Szot*, 41 Conn. App. 238, 674 A.2d 1384 (1996), we reversed the trial court's judgment that converted a legal separation into a marital dissolution on the ground that the court had violated the plaintiff's right to due process by terminating a hearing prematurely and, thus, denying her a reasonable opportunity to be heard on the issues involved. *Id.*, 238-39. Our recitation of the facts in *Szot* is instructive." [Eilers v. Eilers](#), 89 Conn. App. 210, 216, 873 A.2d 185 (2005).
- "The procedure to convert a decree of legal separation into a decree of dissolution is governed by General Statutes §§ 46b-65 and 46b-66 and Practice Book §§ 25-36 and 25-37. Pursuant to § 46b-65(b) and § 25-36, a motion or petition for a decree of dissolution after legal separation may be filed at any time after the entry of a decree of legal separation and must state, inter alia, that the **parties have not resumed marital relations. Thus, 'a party seeking to convert a legal separation into a dissolution under General Statutes 46b-65(b) must comply with Practice Book [§ 25-36] which requires the petitioner to state in the petition whether the parties have resumed marital relations.'**" [Buggy v. Buggy](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Stamford-Norwalk, No. FA05-4005647-S (Oct. 25, 2010) (2010 WL 4723213) (2010 Conn. Super. LEXIS 2833).

Section 1: Effect, Definition and History

A Guide to Resources in the Law Library

SCOPE:

- Bibliographic resources relating to the distinction between legal separation and dissolution of marriage.

DEFINITION:

- Effect of Decree of Legal Separation: "A decree of legal separation shall have the effect of a decree dissolving the marriage except that neither party shall be free to marry." Conn. Gen. Stat. § [46b-67\(c\)](#) (2023)..." ([2024 Supplement](#))

STATUTES:

- Conn. Gen. Stat. (2023)

You can visit your local law library or search the most recent [statutes](#) and [public acts](#) on the Connecticut General Assembly website to confirm that you are using the most up-to-date statutes.

§ [46b-65](#). **Filing of declaration...dissolution of marriage** after legal separation decree when no declaration filed. "(a) If the parties to a decree of legal separation at any time file a written declaration stating that they no longer wish to be legally separated and the declaration is signed, acknowledged and witnessed, and filed with the clerk of the superior court for the judicial district in which the separation was decreed, the declaration shall be entered upon the docket, under the entries relating to the complaint, and the decree shall be vacated and the complaint shall be deemed dismissed.

(b) At any time after the entry of a decree of legal separation, either party may petition the superior court for the judicial district in which the decree was entered for a decree dissolving the marriage. The court may enter the decree in the presence of the party seeking the dissolution or, if a party attests that no restraining order issued pursuant to section 46b-15 or protective order issued pursuant to section 46b-38c, between the parties is in effect or pending before the court, the court may enter the decree **without requiring the presence of either party.**"

§ [46b-67](#). Time frame for court to proceed in action for dissolution of marriage or civil union, legal separation or annulment. "(a) Unless the parties reach a full agreement upon which they ask the court to enter judgment prior to the return date, following the second day after which a complaint for dissolution or legal separation is made returnable, or after the expiration of six months, where proceedings have been stayed under section 46b-53, the court may proceed on the complaint

(b)(1) If the defendant has not appeared, the plaintiff may file a motion for the entry of judgment upon default of appearance, no sooner than thirty days after the day on which the complaint for dissolution of marriage or civil union or for legal separation is made returnable. The plaintiff shall file such motion on a form prescribed by the Chief Court Administrator." ([2024 Supplement](#))

§ [46b-81](#). Assignment of property and transfer of title.
“(a) At the time of entering a decree annulling or dissolving a marriage or for legal separation pursuant to a complaint under section 46b-45, the Superior Court may assign to either spouse all or any part of the estate of the other spouse. The court may pass title to real property to either party or to a third person or may order the sale of such real property, without any act by either spouse, when in the judgment of the court it is the proper mode to carry the decree into effect.”

HISTORY:

- 1955 Supplement to the General Statutes (1949 Rev.) § 3006d
- Public Acts Passed by the General Assembly, [Public Act 55-390](#) (Reg. Sess.), Sec. 1-2. An Act Concerning Legal Separations. [*First Legislation*]
- [Public Act 22-26](#), Sec. 8. An Act Concerning Court Operations. Effective Oct. 1, 2022
- [Public Act 23-46](#), Sec 20. An Act Concerning Judicial Branch Operations, the Sharing of Judicial Branch Records and the Award of Damages in Certain Civil Matters. Effective October 1, 2023.

COURT RULES:

Amendments to the Practice Book (Court Rules) are published in the [Connecticut Law Journal](#) and posted [online](#).

- Connecticut Practice Book (2024)
[Chapter 25. Procedure in Family Matters](#)
 - § 25-2. Complaints for Dissolution of Marriage or Civil Union, Legal Separation, or Annulment
 - § 25-5. Automatic Orders upon Service of Complaint or Application
 - § 25-9. —Answer, Cross Complaint, Claims for Relief by Defendant
 - § 25-36. Motion for Decree Finally Dissolving Marriage or Civil Union after Decree of Legal Separation
 - § 25-37. —Notice and Hearing

FORMS:

Official Judicial Branch forms are frequently updated. Please visit the [Official Court Webforms page](#) for the current forms.

- [Court Forms](#) (Official)
 - [JD-FM-237](#). Legal Separation Complaint
 - [JD-FM-281](#). Affidavit in Support of Request for Entry of Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage or Legal Separation
- 3 Connecticut Practice Series, *Connecticut Civil Practice Forms*, 5th ed., by Daniel A. Morris, Thomson West, 2023-2024 (also available on Westlaw).
 - § 50:32. Legal Separation
 - (a) Legal Separation - Complaint or Amended Complaint
 - (b) Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage After Legal Separation ([Figure 1](#))

- *Library of Connecticut Family Law Forms*, 2d ed., by MacNamara, Welsh, and George, editors, Connecticut Law Tribune, 2014.
Chapter 1. Legal Separation
Form 15-001 Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage after Legal Separation
Form 15-002 Application for Order of Notice (Re: Legal Separation)
Form 15-003 Order for Hearing and Notice (Re: Legal Separation)
- *Handbook of Forms for the Connecticut Family Lawyer*, by Mary Ellen Wynn & Ellen B. Lubell, Connecticut Law Tribune, 1991.
Form No. II-A-2. Complaint, page 6.
Form No. XVIII-A-1a. Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage After Legal Separation, page 261
Form No. XVIII-A-2. Declaration of Resumption of Marital Relationship, page 264

CASES:

Once you have identified useful cases, it is important to update the cases before you rely on them. Updating case law means checking to see if the cases are still good law. You can [contact your local law librarian](#) to learn about the tools available to you to update cases.

- Meeks v. Meeks, Superior Court, Judicial District of Middlesex at Middletown, No. FA06-4005259-S (July 26, 2013) (56 Conn. L. Rptr. 579) (2013 WL 4420060). **"The court also found that the agreement not to proceed with the dissolution but rather to seek a legal separation was done to allow the defendant to remain on the plaintiff's medical insurance because he had undergone major back surgery and was still recovering from that operation."**
- Berzins v. Berzins, 306 Conn. 651, 654, 51 A.3d 941, (2012). **"The plaintiff commenced the present action seeking a legal separation from the named defendant, David Berzins (Berzins), and other relief. Berzins failed to file an appearance and the case was placed on the uncontested list for a January 26, 2006 hearing, at which Berzins failed to appear. At the hearing, the plaintiff filed a motion to amend her complaint to seek dissolution of the marriage. The court... rendered a default judgment against Berzins and dissolved the parties' marriage pursuant to the terms of the plaintiff's proposed orders."**
- Mitchell v. Mitchell, 194 Conn. 312, 318, 481 A.2d 31, 34 (1984). **"General Statutes 46b-65 (codified as § 46-61 and recodified in 1979 as § 46b-65) was enacted in 1973 as part of a complete revision of the domestic relations statutes. Public Acts 1973, No. 73-373."**
- Mitchell v. Mitchell, 194 Conn. 312, 321, 481 A.2d 31, 34 (1984). **"An obvious goal of the legislature in enacting § 46b-65 was to reduce the role of the court by creating a summary proceeding when there is no dispute between the parties. To that effect subsection (a) contemplates that the court satisfy itself that the prescribed formal declaration has been filed before vacating the separation decree while**

subsection (b) contemplates a minimal role for the court when there is no dispute that the parties had not resumed marital relations. When that is the case the statute requires the court to give effect to the parties' status and convert a de facto dissolution into a de jure dissolution.”

- [Satter v. Satter](#), 153 Conn. 230, 231, 215 A.2d 415 (1965). **“In 1955, the legislature enacted Public Act No. 390, now General Statutes §§ 46-29 and 46-30, which provided that a legal separation could be decreed upon the petition of a party on grounds which would have entitled that party to a divorce. Such a separation would have the effect of a divorce except that neither party would be free to marry any third party unless a decree dissolving and terminating the marriage was subsequently rendered upon petition of either party.”**
- [Viglione v. Viglione](#), 22 Conn. Supp. 65, 69, 160 A.2d 501 (1960). **“Since there is nowhere any provision that a decree of separation in any manner affects other rights and obligations of married persons, it appears that despite a decree of separation each separated husband and wife retains all the statutory rights of property, inheritance and administration in the estate of the other together with all the obligations of the continuing marriage contract except for those concerned with cohabitation.”**

ENCYCLOPEDIAS:

- 24 *Am Jur 2d* Divorce & Separation, Thomson West, 2018 (Also available on Westlaw).
§ 372. —Converting limited divorce into absolute divorce
- 27A *CJS* Divorce, Thomson West, 2016 (Also available on Westlaw).
§ 348. Grant of absolute or limited divorce

TEXTS & TREATISES:

Each of our law libraries own the Connecticut treatises cited. You can [contact](#) us or visit our [catalog](#) to determine which of our law libraries own the other treatises cited or to search for more treatises.

References to online databases refer to in-library use of these databases. Remote access is not available.

- *LexisNexis Practice Guide: Connecticut Family Law*, Louise Truax, Editor, 2024 ed., LexisNexis (also available on Lexis Advance).
Chapter 3. Dissolution of Marriage and Legal Separation
§ 3.27. Checklist: Defining a Legal Separation
§ 3.28. Distinguishing a Legal Separation from a Dissolution of Marriage
§ 3.29. Determining Residency
- 1 *Family Law and Practice*, Arnold H. Rutkin, Matthew Bender, 2023 (also available on Lexis).
§ 2.02 [1][a][ii] Separate maintenance or divorce *a mensa et thoro*
- 7 *Connecticut Practice Series. Family Law and Practice with Forms*, 3rd ed., by Arnold H. Rutkin et al, 2010, with 2022-2023 supplement, Thomson West (also available on Westlaw).
Chapter 10 Legal separation

- § 10:2. Basis for legal separation
- § 10:5. Parties
- § 10:6. Distinction from dissolution
- § 10:8. Judgment
- § 10:9. Resumption of marital relations;
reconciliation
- § 10:10. Conversion to dissolution—Procedure
- § 10:11. Conversion to dissolution—Legal
considerations

- 8A *Connecticut Practice Series. Family Law and Practice with Forms*, 3rd ed., by Arnold H. Rutkin et al, Thomson West, 2010, with 2022-2023 supplement (also available on Westlaw).

- § 51:10. Effect of judgment

- 2 *Stephenson's Connecticut Civil Procedure*, 3rd ed., by Renee Bevacqua Bollier et al., Atlantic Law Book Co., 2002, with 2003 supplement.

- Chapter 20. Family Law Procedures

- § 241. History of Connecticut's Divorce Law

- § 262. Legal Separation

- 1 *Connecticut Practice Series: Superior Court Civil Rules*, by Wesley W. Horton et al., Thomson West, 2024 ed., (also available on Westlaw).

- Authors' Comments following § 25-36** (Motion for Decree Finally Dissolving Marriage or Civil Union after Decree of Legal Separation)

- *Handbook of Forms for the Connecticut Family Lawyer*, by Mary Ellen Wynn & Ellen B. Lubell, Connecticut Law Tribune, 1991.

- Chapter XVIII. Legal separation,
Notes & Comments, p. 260.

LAW REVIEWS:

Public access to law review databases is available on-site at each of our [law libraries](#).

- Arthur E. Balbirer and Gaetano Ferro, *Survey of 1991 Developments in Connecticut Family Law*, 66 Conn. B.J. 40 (1992).

- Conversion of legal separation to dissolution,
p. 62-63.

- Linda D. Elrod and Robert G. Spector, *A Review of the year in Family Law 2014-2015: Family Law Continues to Evolve as Marriage Equality is Attained*, 49 Fam. L.Q. 545 (Winter 2016).

- Postmarital contracts, p. 557.

- Jon T. Kukucka & Kelly A. Scott, *The Supreme Court on Family Law during the Past Decade (2010-2019)*, 94 Conn. B.J. 26 (2022).

Section 2: Grounds for Legal Separation

A Guide to Resources in the Law Library

"A decree of dissolution of a marriage or a decree of legal separation shall be granted upon a finding that one of the following causes has occurred:

- (1) The marriage has broken down irretrievably;
- (2) the parties have lived apart by reason of incompatibility for a continuous period of at least the eighteen months immediately prior to the service of the complaint and that there is no reasonable prospect that they will be reconciled;
- (3) adultery;
- (4) fraudulent contract;
- (5) willful desertion for one year with total neglect of duty;
- (6) **seven years' absence, during all of which period the absent party has not been heard from;**
- (7) habitual intemperance;
- (8) intolerable cruelty;
- (9) sentence to imprisonment for life or the commission of any infamous crime involving a violation of conjugal duty and punishable by imprisonment for a period in excess of one year;
- (10) legal confinement in a hospital or hospitals or other similar institution or institutions, because of mental illness, for at least an accumulated period totaling five years within the period of six years next preceding the date of **the complaint.**" Conn. Gen. Stat. § [46b-40](#)(c) (2023) (emphasis added).

The [Dissolution of Marriage in Connecticut](#) research guide provides more information on the individual grounds for divorce and legal separation.

Section 3: Reconciliation (After Legal Separation)

A Guide to Resources in the Law Library

SCOPE:

Bibliographic sources relating to reconciliation after legal separation.

STATUTES:

You can visit your local law library or search the most recent [statutes](#) and [public acts](#) on the Connecticut General Assembly website to confirm that you are using the most up-to-date statutes.

- Conn. Gen. Stat. (2023)

§ [46b-65](#). **Filing of declaration...dissolution of** marriage after legal separation decree when no declaration filed. **"(a) If the parties to a decree of legal separation at any time file a written declaration stating that they no longer wish to be legally separated and the declaration is signed, acknowledged and witnessed, and filed with the clerk of the superior court for the judicial district in which the separation was decreed, the declaration shall be entered upon the docket, under the entries relating to the complaint, and the decree shall be vacated and the complaint shall be deemed dismissed."**

FORMS:

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- *Handbook of Forms for the Connecticut Family Lawyer*, by Mary Ellen Wynn & Ellen B. Lubell, Connecticut Law Tribune, 1991.
Form No. XVIII-A-2. Declaration of Resumption of Marital Relationship, page 264.
- *7 West's Legal Forms 3d* Domestic Relations, Thomson West, 2006 (Also available on Westlaw).
Chapter 11 Reconciliation Agreements
11:1. In general
11:11. Reconciliation agreement
11:12. Reconciliation agreement while divorce proceeding pending – Simple form
11:13. Reconciliation agreement after domestic violence proceeding

CASES:

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- [Mitchell v. Mitchell](#), 194 Conn. 312, 319, 481 A.2d 31 (1984). **"General Statutes 46b-65...** The present statute completely revamped its predecessor. Subsection (a) established a new and expeditious method by which parties who had reconciled could vacate their separation agreement without the intervention of a judge. They simply file a signed, acknowledged, and witnessed declaration of resumption with the clerk of the Superior Court in which the separation was decreed and if the court finds that the declaration meets the statutory requirements, the decree is vacated and the original complaint is dismissed."
- [Mitchell v. Mitchell](#), 194 Conn. 312, 326, 481 A.2d 31 (1984). **"If the parties had resumed marital relations, even for a trial reconciliation, or the petitioner states in the**

petition that they did not resume and the defendant disputes that fact, the parties cannot proceed under the summary method of § 46b-65(b) but must instead proceed under the general dissolution provision, § 46b-40.”

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- *7 Connecticut Practice Series. Family Law and Practice with Forms*, 3rd ed., by Arnold H. Rutkin et al, 2010, with 2022-2023 supplement, Thomson West (also available on Westlaw).
 - Chapter 10. Legal separation
 - § 10:9. Resumption of marital relations; reconciliation

Section 4: Conversion of Legal Separation into Dissolution of Marriage

A Guide to Resources in the Law Library

SCOPE:

Bibliographic sources relating to the conversion of a legal separation into a dissolution of marriage.

DEFINITIONS:

- Financial Orders: **“Neither the trial court’s memorandum of decision nor the judgment file contains any finding that the orders entered at the time of the legal separation were ‘fair and equitable’ in light of the circumstances existing at the time of the dissolution. Therefore, although we hold that the trial court properly granted the defendant’s petition converting the parties’ legal separation into a dissolution of marriage, the trial court’s incorporation of the prior orders entered in the decree of legal separation into the decree of dissolution of marriage without a finding that the orders were ‘fair and equitable’ at the time of the dissolution was improper.”** [Mignosa v. Mignosa](#), 25 Conn. App. 210, 216, 594 A.2d 15 (1991).
- **“Notwithstanding the decisions in *Mignosa* and *Szot*, there is a split of authority within the Superior Court regarding whether the trial court may modify a separation agreement when incorporating it into a dissolution decree because of the earlier Supreme Court opinion in *Mitchell v. Mitchell*, 194 Conn. 312, 481 A.2d 31 (1984).”** [Buggy v. Buggy](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Stamford – Norwalk, No. FA05-4005647-S (Oct. 25, 2010) (2010 WL 4723213) (2010 Conn. Super. LEXIS 2833).

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- Conn. Gen. Stat. (2023)

§ [46b-65](#). **Filing of declaration...dissolution of marriage** after legal separation decree when no declaration filed. (a) If the parties to a decree of legal separation at any time file a written declaration stating that they no longer wish to be legally separated and the declaration is signed, acknowledged and witnessed, and filed with the clerk of the superior court for the judicial district in which the separation was decreed, the declaration shall be entered upon the docket, under the entries relating to the complaint, and the decree shall be vacated and the complaint shall be deemed dismissed.

(b) At any time after the entry of a decree of legal separation, either party may petition the superior court for the judicial district in which the decree was entered for a decree dissolving the marriage. The court may enter the decree in the presence of the party seeking the dissolution or, if a party attests that no restraining order issued pursuant to section 46b-15, or protective

order issued pursuant to section 46b-38c, between the parties is in effect or pending before the court, the court may enter the decree without requiring the presence of either party.

COURT RULES:

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- Connecticut Practice Book (2024)
[Chapter 25. Procedure in Family Matters](#)
§ 25-36. Motion for Decree Finally Dissolving Marriage or Civil Union after Decree of Legal Separation
§ 25-37. —Notice and Hearing

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- 3 Connecticut Practice Series, *Connecticut Civil Practice Forms*, 5th ed., by Daniel A. Morris, Thomson West, 2023-2024 (also available on Westlaw).
§ 50:32. Legal Separation
(a) Legal Separation - Complaint or Amended Complaint
(b) Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage After Legal Separation
[Form 504.2. Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage After Legal Separation \(Figure 1\)](#)
- *Library of Connecticut Family Law Forms*, 2d ed., by MacNamara, Welsh, and George, editors, Connecticut Law Tribune, 2014.
Chapter 1. Legal Separation
Form 15-001 Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage after Legal Separation
Form 15-002 Application for Order of Notice (Re: Legal Separation)
Form 15-003 Order for Hearing and Notice (Re: Legal Separation)
- *Handbook of Forms for the Connecticut Family Lawyer*, by Mary Ellen Wynn & Ellen B. Lubell, Connecticut Law Tribune, 1991.
Form No. XVIII-A-1a. Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage After Legal Separation, page 261.
Form No. XVIII-A-2. Declaration of Resumption of Marital Relationship, page 264.

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- [Buggy v. Buggy](#), 141 Conn. App. 733, 735, 64 A. 3d 778, (2013). “...the court entered an order dissolving the parties’ marriage and converted the decree of legal separation to a decree of dissolution. The court determined that a change in custody in favor of the defendant was in the best interests of the minor children and further that there had **been a substantial change in the defendant’s financial circumstances.**”
- [Lester v. Lester](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of New Haven at Meriden, No. FA04-4000021-S (Sept. 11, 2013) (56 Conn. L. Rptr. 787, 788) (2013 WL 5422841). “By

Once you have identified useful cases, it is important to update the cases before you rely on them. Updating case law means checking to see if the cases are still good law. You can [contact your local law librarian](#) to learn about the tools available to you to update cases.

motion filed June 12, 2013, the plaintiff requested, pursuant to General Statutes § 46b-65 to convert the legal separation into a divorce decree. General Statutes §§ 46b-65 and 46b-66, and Practice Book §§ 25-36 and 25-37 govern the procedure to convert a decree of legal separation into a **decree of dissolution.**"

- [Meeks v. Meeks](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Middlesex at Middletown, No. FA06-4005259-S (July 26, 2013) (56 Conn. L. Rptr. 579, 581) (2013 WL 4420060). "Nevertheless, even though there is a slight split in authority as to whether *Mitchell* and *Mignosa* collectively require that the court inquire into the fairness of a separation agreement, a majority of the trial courts have made the initial determination of whether the agreement remains fair and equitable, which remains to be the current trend. Given the fact that *Mitchell* primarily focused on the implications of resumed marital relations, rather than a **party's challenge as to the fairness and equity of the original agreement**, along with the fact that *Mignosa* stated that a court is required to determine whether the original agreement remains fair and equitable, the current trend of inquiring into the fairness of the agreements remains the stronger position.
- [Treadwell v. Treadwell](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Fairfield at Bridgeport, No. FA01-0386575-S (Sept. 24, 2012) (2012 WL 4902757). **"the court finds that the order of alimony, as modified by order of the court (Winslow, J.) on January 13, 2011 are not fair and equitable today. Therefore, the court grants the defendant's Motion to Modify the Alimony (#142.79).** The court is however, bound by the provisions of the Legal Separation which are property distributions which effect the orders of alimony."

"The Husband is asking the court to interpret the Legal Separation Agreement property settlement to mean that the Wife is only to share in one incentive, not the subsequent years incentive. The court must look to the plain language of the Agreement. Because a stipulation is considered a contract, [o]ur interpretation of a separation agreement that is incorporated into a dissolution decree is guided by the general principles governing the construction of contracts." (Internal quotation marks omitted).

- [Sargent v. Sargent](#), 125 Conn. App. 824, 826, 9 A.3d 799 (2011). **"On March 16, 2009, the defendant filed a motion for modification of alimony and a petition for a decree dissolving the parties' marriage pursuant to General Statutes § 46b-65(b).** In support of his motion for modification of alimony, the defendant claimed that his **'financial circumstances [had] changed significantly'** from the time that the parties were legally separated. The plaintiff filed an objection to the defendant's petition for

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dissolution on June 3, 2009, claiming that conversion of the separation into a dissolution would cause her irreparable **harm.**").

- [Buggy v. Buggy](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Stamford–Norwalk, No. FA05-4005647-S (Oct. 25, 2010) (2010 WL 4723213) (2010 Conn. Super. LEXIS 2833). **"Notwithstanding the decisions in *Mignosa* and *Szot*, there is a split of authority within the Superior Court regarding whether the trial court may modify a separation agreement when incorporating it into a dissolution decree because of the earlier Supreme Court opinion in *Mitchell v. Mitchell*, 194 Conn. 312, 481 A.2d 31 (1984)."**
- [Myjak v. Myjak](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Middlesex, No. FA97-0083027-S (Nov. 17, 2000) (29 Conn. L. Rptr. 30, 31) (2000 WL 1827228). **"A final distribution of property and financial orders after legal separation should not be based on a separation agreement without an inquiry by the court as to whether the agreement is fair and equitable at the time of the dissolution. *Mignosa v. Mignosa*, 25 Conn. App. 210, 594 A.2d 15 (1991)."**
- [Herbert v. Herbert](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Waterbury, No. FA 990155947S, (Mar. 3, 2000) (26 Conn. L. Rptr. 625) (2000 WL 277281). **"If the court renders a decree of legal separation the parties may then pursue one of two avenues, the summary route under 46b-65 or the trial route under 46b-40. The summary route contemplates mutual agreement of the parties ... One of the purposes of [Practice Book § 25-36] is to enable the court to ascertain whether the case is an appropriate candidate for summary disposition.' Id., 325-26. If there is a question as to whether the case is a candidate for summary disposition, then the court can fix a time for a hearing to resolve any disputes. See Id ., 326;..."**
- [Szot v. Szot](#), 41 Conn. App. 238, 241, 674 A.2d 1384 (1996). **"In order to determine whether such orders were fair and equitable, the parties were entitled to an opportunity to present evidence in a hearing."**
- [Bemonte v. Bemonte](#), 44 Conn. Supp. 431, 435-436, 693 A.2d 739 (1996). **"... the judgment of legal separation, once the appeal period has expired, is final. The division of assets and liabilities is also final. An assignment of property is nonmodifiable. Hence, the court is without jurisdiction or other authority to modify a final judgment of legal separation insofar as it assigns property. The holding in *Mignosa* must give way to the holding of the majority in *Mitchell* which controls the outcome of the present case."**
- [Marsillio v. Marsillio](#), Superior Court, Judicial District of Bridgeport, No. FA93-0301875-S (Nov. 7, 1994) (12 Conn.

Once you have identified useful cases, it is important to update the cases before you rely on them. Updating case law means checking to see if the cases are still good law. You can [contact your local law librarian](#) to learn about the tools available to you to update cases.

L. Rptr. 665, 666) (1994 WL 645954). **“To be added to the statutory requirement for a decree of dissolution of marriage after a decree of legal separation are two further requirements, one, that the parties have not resumed living together (*Mitchell v. Mitchell*, supra) and two, that the agreement of the parties entered into at the time of the decree of legal separation continues to be fair and equitable at the time of entry of the decree of dissolution. (*Mignosa v. Mignosa*, supra.)”**

- [Mignosa v. Mignosa](#), 25 Conn. App. 210, 212-213, 594 A.2d 15 (1991). **“At the hearing, the plaintiff raised the issue of resumption of marital relations for the first time. She denied that marital relations had not been resumed claiming that she and the defendant had engaged in sexual intercourse since the granting of the legal separation. ...**(A)t various times after said legal separation the parties had social contact but none of these contacts ever reached a level of resumption of marital relations within the purview of *General Statutes § 46b-65.*” (Internal quotation marks omitted).****
- [Mignosa v. Mignosa](#), 25 Conn. App. 210, 216, 594 A.2d 15 (1991). **“Therefore, although we hold that the trial court properly granted the defendant’s petition converting the parties’ legal separation into a dissolution of marriage, the trial court’s incorporation of the prior orders entered in the decree of legal separation into the decree of dissolution of marriage without a finding that the orders were ‘fair and equitable’ at the time of the dissolution was improper.”**

DIGESTS:

- *Connecticut Family Law Citations: A Reference Guide to Connecticut Family Law Decisions*, by Monika D. Young, LexisNexis, 2023

ENCYCLOPEDIAS:

- 35 *ALR3d* 1238, *Separation Within Statute Making Separation A Substantive Ground For Divorce*, by Ferdinand S. Tinio, Thomson West, 1971.

Encyclopedias and ALRs are available in print at some law library locations and accessible online at all law library locations.

Online databases are available for in-library use. Remote access is not available.

OLR REPORTS:

- *Connecticut’s Expedited Divorce Processes*, Michelle Kirby, Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Legislative Research Report, [2016-R-0213](#) (October 5, 2016).

[Office of Legislative Research](#) reports summarize and analyze the law in effect on the date of each report’s publication. Current law may be different from what is discussed in the reports.

TEXTS &
TREATISES:

Each of our law libraries own the Connecticut treatises cited. You can [contact](#) us or visit our [catalog](#) to determine which of our law libraries own the other treatises cited or to search for more treatises.

References to online databases refer to in-library use of these databases. Remote access is not available.

- *LexisNexis Practice Guide: Connecticut Family Law*, Louise Truax, Editor, 2024 ed., LexisNexis (also available on Lexis Advance).
Chapter 3. Dissolution of Marriage and Legal Separation
§ 3.30 Converting a Legal Separation into a Dissolution
- 1 *Connecticut Practice Series: Superior Court Civil Rules*, by Wesley W. Horton et al., Thomson West, 2024 ed. (also available on Westlaw).
Authors' Comments following § 25-36 (Motion for Decree Finally Dissolving Marriage or Civil Union after Decree of Legal Separation)
- 7 *Connecticut Practice Series. Family Law and Practice with Forms*, 3rd ed., by Arnold H. Rutkin et al, 2010, with 2022-2023 supplement, Thomson West (also available on Westlaw).
Chapter 10. Legal separation
§ 10:10. Conversion to dissolution-Procedure
§ 10:11. Conversion to dissolution-Legal considerations
- 2 *Stephenson's Connecticut Civil Procedure*, 3rd ed., by Renee Bevacqua Bollier et al., Atlantic Law Book Co., 2002, with 2003 supplement.
Chapter 20. Family law procedures
§ 262. Legal Separation
c. Procedure

Figure 1: Petition for decree dissolving marriage after legal separation

(Caption of legal separation action)

Petition for Decree Dissolving Marriage after Legal Separation

To the Superior Court for *(judicial district where legal separation was entered)*

The undersigned, a party to the above entitled action, respectfully represents

1. On *(date)* a judgment for legal separation was entered by this court in the above entitled action as of record appears.

2. The parties have not resumed marital relations since the entry of the decree, and no written declaration of the resumption of marital relations has been filed pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat., § 46b-65.

Wherefore the undersigned prays that the court enter a decree dissolving the marriage of the parties.

(Name of Petitioner)

By _____

His Attorney

*Per [CT Public Act 22-26, section 8](#), the requirement of stating that "the parties have not resumed marital relations" has been replaced by the parties "stating that they no longer wish to be legally separated."

Figure 2: Application for order of notice

(Caption of legal separation action)

APPLICATION FOR ORDER OF NOTICE

The undersigned respectfully represents:

1. The accompanying petition for a decree dissolving the marriage of the parties to this action is being presented to the court.

2. The adverse party is now within the state and is residing at

or

2. The adverse party is not within the state, but resides at

or

2. The place of residence of the adverse party is unknown.

Wherefore, the petitioner requests that the court fix a time and place for a hearing on the petition and make an order of notice thereof

by personal service

or

in such manner as the court deems reasonable.

Petitioner

By _____

