
Judiciary Committee

HB 1589

Title: An act relating to solemnizing marriages.

Brief Description: Concerning the solemnization of marriages.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Rodne, Angel, Morris, Morrell, Habib, Carlyle, Ryu and Pollet.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizes state and local government elected officials in the executive and legislative branches to solemnize marriages.

Hearing Date: 2/20/13

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background:

Marriage is a civil contract between two persons who are each age 18 or older and who are otherwise capable. There is no particular form required for the solemnization of a marriage, except that the parties must assent to the marriage in the presence of an authorized person and two witnesses.

Persons who are authorized to solemnize marriages are active or retired judicial officers and officials of religious organizations. Authorized judicial officers are judges of the Washington Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, superior courts, and limited jurisdiction courts, as well as commissioners of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, or superior courts. Authorized religious officials are any licensed or ordained minister, priest, imam, rabbi, or similar official of a religious organization.

A person who solemnizes a marriage must deliver, within 30 days after the marriage, a certificate of the marriage to the county auditor and to the state registrar of vital statistics.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

State and local government elected officials in the executive and legislative branches are authorized to solemnize marriages. An elected official is not required to solemnize any marriage, and is immune from any civil claim or cause of action based on a refusal to solemnize any marriage.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.