

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2385

As Reported by House Committee On:
Judiciary

Title: An act relating to solemnizing marriage.

Brief Description: Concerning solemnization of marriage by elected officials.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins and Appleton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 1/31/18, 2/1/18 [DP].

<p>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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Jinkins, Chair; Graves, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goodman, Hansen, Kirby, Muri, Orwall and Valdez.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Haler, Klippert and Shea.

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

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Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, superior courts, limited jurisdiction courts, and tribal courts of a federally recognized tribe, 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.

Summary of Bill:

State and local government elected officials in the executive and legislative branches are authorized to solemnize marriages.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) People who have been ordained by the Church of the Rolling Stone or the Church of the Internet are authorized to solemnize marriages. Elected officials have more standing in the community than those entities and should be able to marry people. The legislation does not take away anything from the current law. It simply adds to those who can sign marriage documents. Elected officials will not have to marry people if they do not want to do so.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hudgins, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.