

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1657

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the authority of justices, judges, and judicial officers of federal courts to solemnize marriages.

Brief Description: Authorizing justices, judges, and judicial officers of federal courts to solemnize marriages.

Sponsors: Representatives Street, Cheney, Simmons, Taylor, Ormsby and Hutchins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Civil Rights & Judiciary: 2/1/23, 2/3/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/23, 96-0.

Passed Senate: 3/31/23, 48-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes federal justices, judges, and judicial officers to solemnize marriages.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS & JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Hansen, Chair; Farivar, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Graham, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cheney, Entenman, Goodman, Peterson, Rude, Thai and Walen.

Staff: John Burzynski (786-7133).

Background:

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

Washington authorizes several officers and persons, active or retired, to solemnize marriages, including Washington court justices, judges, and commissioners; judges of tribal courts from a federally recognized tribe; and any regularly licensed or ordained minister or any priest, imam, rabbi, or similar official of any religious organization.

Summary of Bill:

Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and all judges and judicial officers of the federal courts, 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) Federal judges should be allowed to oversee a wedding. Current law provides a list of judges who can oversee weddings, but federal judges are not included. This is believed to be an oversight. In one instance, a federal judge was asked by her cousin to oversee a wedding but had to obtain a certificate online and become a minister to officiate the wedding. This bill would make a small bipartisan change in the law.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Chipalo Street, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.