

Legislative Analysis



PREMARITAL EDUCATION

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House Bill 5467

Sponsor: Rep. Joanne Voorhees

Committee: Judiciary

Complete to 3-29-04

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5467 AS INTRODUCED 2-5-04

Under current law, there is a three-day wait for marriage licenses after application, unless the county clerk (“for good and sufficient cause shown”) decides to deliver the license immediately after application. House Bill 5467 would amend Public Act 128 of 1887, the marriage license act, to require a man and a woman who intend to apply for a marriage license to either complete a program in premarital education or counseling, or, in the alternative, wait 27 days rather than three for the delivery of the marriage license.

In addition, if either party to the marriage was younger than 18 years old (unless the person was an emancipated minor), both parties applying for the license and at least one parent or guardian of each party would have to complete the premarital education or counseling program (or wait the additional time for a license).

However, despite these provisions, the bill would retain the option of the county clerk to deliver a license immediately for good and sufficient reason shown.

A premarital education or counseling program would have to emphasize skill-building strategies and would have to include, at least, conflict management, communication skills, financial matters, and if the couple has or intends to have children, child and parenting responsibilities. The program would have to be at least four hours long and be conducted by a licensed professional counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed or limited licensed psychologist, certified social worker, social worker licensed or registered under the Public Health Code, psychiatrist, or an official representative of a religious institution or his or her designee.

A program provider could offer a fee schedule to accommodate families of various financial means, including allowing participation by indigent individuals for no fee. Payment for such a program would be made directly to the program provider.

MCL 551.102 et al.

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