

By Senator Stargel

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to a Florida Guide to a Healthy
3 Marriage; creating s. 741.0307, F.S.; creating the
4 Marriage Education Committee within the Department of
5 Children and Families; specifying that the committee
6 must be appointed and shall convene decennially;
7 requiring the initial committee to create the Florida
8 Guide to a Healthy Marriage and subsequent decennial
9 committees to review and update the contents of the
10 guide; specifying the membership of and appointment
11 process for the committee; limiting the terms of
12 committee members; providing for the filling of
13 vacancies; requiring each committee to submit the
14 completed guide to the Governor and the Legislature;
15 requiring that certain content be included in the
16 guide; requiring the committee to oversee the design
17 and layout of the guide; requiring the committee to
18 raise funds from private sources to pay for the design
19 and layout of the guide; authorizing the committee to
20 raise funds from private sources to cover guide
21 printing and distribution costs; providing that guides
22 are not required to be printed or distributed unless
23 adequate funds are raised to cover the costs of
24 printing and distribution; requiring the clerk of each
25 circuit court to post an electronic copy of the guide
26 on the court's website and to distribute printed
27 copies of the guide if they are made available;
28 encouraging the clerk of each circuit court to provide
29 a list of course providers and websites where certain

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30 classes are available; amending s. 741.04, F.S.;

31 prohibiting a county court judge or clerk of the

32 circuit court from issuing a marriage license unless

33 he or she is first presented with a statement

34 verifying that both parties have obtained and read the

35 guide or have viewed an electronic presentation

36 containing certain information; providing an effective

37 date.

38

39 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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41 Section 1. Section 741.0307, Florida Statutes, is created

42 to read:

43 741.0307 Marriage Education Committee; Florida Guide to a

44 Healthy Marriage.-

45 (1) There is created within the Department of Children and

46 Families, for administrative purposes only, the Marriage

47 Education Committee, which must be appointed and shall convene

48 every 10 years. The initial committee, which must be appointed

49 by September 1, 2018, shall create the Florida Guide to a

50 Healthy Marriage, while subsequent decennial committees, which

51 must be appointed by September 1 of the applicable year, shall

52 review and update the contents of the guide. The committee

53 consists of six marriage education and family advocates, two

54 appointed by the Governor, two appointed by the President of the

55 Senate, and two appointed by the Speaker of the House of

56 Representatives. The appointees shall serve 1-year terms or

57 until such time as the committee has completed its work,

58 whichever is earlier. A vacancy on the committee must be filled

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59 for the unexpired portion of the member's term in the same
60 manner as the original appointment. Each decennial committee
61 shall submit the completed guide to the Governor, the President
62 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

63 (2) At a minimum, the guide must include all of the
64 following:

65 (a) Resources on the following topics: conflict management,
66 communication skills, family expectations, financial management,
67 domestic violence prevention, and parenting responsibilities.

68 (b) Advice from marriage education and family advocates to
69 assist couples in forming and maintaining long-term marital
70 relationships.

71 (c) Information on premarital education resources, marriage
72 enrichment education, and resources available to couples to help
73 them restore a marriage potentially facing dissolution.

74 (d) Contact information and website links to additional
75 resources and local professional and community services to
76 further assist couples with marital relationships.

77 (3) The Marriage Education Committee shall oversee the
78 design and layout of the guide. The committee shall raise funds
79 from private sources to pay for the design and layout of the
80 guide, and the committee may raise funds from private sources to
81 cover the costs of printing and the distribution of guides in
82 printed format. If adequate funds are not raised to cover the
83 costs of printing and the distribution of guides in printed
84 format, the guides are not required to be printed or
85 distributed.

86 (4) The clerk of each circuit court shall post an
87 electronic copy of the guide on the court's website. If the

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88 Marriage Education Committee provides printed copies of the
89 guide to clerks' offices, each clerk must make the guide
90 available to marriage license applicants. The clerk of each
91 circuit court is encouraged to provide a list of course
92 providers and websites where marriage and relationship skill-
93 building classes are available.

94 Section 2. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (2) of
95 section 741.04, Florida Statutes, to read:

96 741.04 Marriage license issued.—

97 (2) No county court judge or clerk of the circuit court in
98 this state shall issue a license for the marriage of any person
99 unless there shall be first presented and filed with him or her:

100 (c) A statement that verifies that both parties have
101 obtained and read or have otherwise accessed the information
102 contained in the Florida Guide to a Healthy Marriage created
103 under s. 741.0307 or have viewed an electronic media
104 presentation of information regarding conflict management,
105 communication skills, family expectations, financial management,
106 domestic violence prevention, and parenting responsibilities.

107 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.