

Amendment No.

COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION

ADOPTED	_____	(Y/N)
ADOPTED AS AMENDED	_____	(Y/N)
ADOPTED W/O OBJECTION	_____	(Y/N)
FAILED TO ADOPT	_____	(Y/N)
WITHDRAWN	_____	(Y/N)
OTHER		

1 Committee/Subcommittee hearing bill: Civil Justice Subcommittee
 2 Representative Yarborough offered the following:

Amendment (with title amendment)

Remove everything after the enacting clause and insert:

Section 1. Section 741.0307, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

741.0307 Florida Healthy Marriage Handbook.—

9 (1) There shall be created a handbook which includes
 10 resources, information, and website links to assist in forming
 11 and maintaining a long-term marital relationship. This handbook
 12 is supplemental to the Family Law Handbook created under s.
 13 741.0306.

(2) The handbook shall read substantially as follows:

Introduction

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17
18 Congratulations! You have made the decision to get married. This
19 decision means that you and your partner agree to enter into a
20 formal contract. This contract outlines the conditions of your
21 new partnership. This partnership impacts the ownership of your
22 money and possessions and the way you relate to each other. When
23 you talk about your marriage expectations before getting
24 married, you begin to understand the new roles and
25 responsibilities. This mutual understanding helps to lay a
26 foundation that can help you build a successful, enduring
27 marriage.

28
29 The purpose of this handbook is to provide information to
30 marriage license applicants that can help to create successful
31 marriages. It includes topics such as learning to communicate
32 effectively, building the team, solving problems
33 collaboratively, and resolving conflicts. The handbook also
34 provides general information on economic issues, raising a
35 family, and the consequences that occur when marriages fail.

36
37 Building a Marriage

38
39 As you and your spouse begin your journey together, the first
40 thing you will need to know is where you are going. Your shared
41 destination is determined by your personal and shared values.

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42 The marriage journey will require lots of decisions from both of
43 you. Through mutual respect, trust, honesty, and love, you will
44 have a rewarding trip.

45
46 Understanding Your Values

47
48 Your values are the foundation for all of your thinking and
49 decision-making. Every decision you make is an effort to align
50 your actions to your values. When you marry, you will be sharing
51 your life with another person. It is so important that you know
52 your own values and the values of your intended spouse. Think
53 about the values you consider sacred in your life and share this
54 information with your partner.

55
56 Discuss these issues prior to making a marriage commitment.
57 Build upon your mutual ideals. A harmonious, lasting marriage
58 will be built upon a foundation of shared values and the
59 effective communication of these values.

60
61 Building Your Team

62
63 Marriage is a team effort. One of the definitions of the word
64 team is "a group of persons pulling together." Talking to each
65 other and sharing in decisions that affect both team members is
66 very important. Talking, listening, and valuing your partner's

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67 ideas and contributions will make your marriage team strong and
68 healthy.

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70 Learning Effective Communication

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72 Learning to communicate effectively requires commitment from
73 both you and your partner. It takes time and LOTS of energy, but
74 it is worth the effort. To commune literally means "to put in
75 common; to share." The goal of effective communication is to
76 create a common understanding with your partner. This common
77 understanding is the cement of a strong marriage. Honesty is an
78 essential component of effective communication. However, honesty
79 must be tempered with kindness. Good communication between both
80 of you promotes mutual trust and respect.

81

82 Successful marriages depend on good communication between both
83 partners. Learning to be a good communicator takes patience and
84 practice.

85

86 Resolving Conflicts

87

88 Another step in building a lasting marriage is learning to
89 examine and confront issues effectively. Couples in the
90 healthiest marriages experience conflicts. Conflicts are normal
91 because you and your partner have different beliefs and

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92 opinions. Conflict is simply a clash between these beliefs and
93 opinions. The cause of conflict is that you and your partner see
94 and approach situations and events differently. Conflict results
95 when there are opposite points of view and each person believes
96 that their viewpoint is right, and their partner's viewpoint is
97 wrong. The result is two different interpretations.

98
99 People in conflict are seldom upset about what they think they
100 are upset about. One event may trigger an emotional outburst.
101 The outburst often is caused by a series of unresolved issues. A
102 win/lose situation will not solve the problem. Resolving
103 conflicts effectively strives to achieve a win/win solution for
104 both of you. How can you find an answer that benefits you and
105 your partner? The first step is for the two of you to step out
106 of the battle and look beyond the event that created the
107 conflict. The next step is to shift your focus to your common
108 interests, mutual values, and positive qualities.

109
110 Refocusing your own thinking helps to calm emotions. You can
111 redirect your thinking – and your partner's – to what you both
112 really want: an activity or mutual goal, something more
113 satisfying than the conflict. Couples can change their conflict
114 experiences by changing their thoughts about the situation.

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116 Keeping the Marriage Vital

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118 When you first get married, usually everything is new and
119 exciting. But how do you keep your marriage new and exciting
120 year after year? You have started a lifelong journey together.
121 This journey will have many stops along the way. Each of your
122 destinations will bring maturity to your relationship and to
123 each of you. Your affection for each other increases through the
124 lessons that you learn together and the laughter and the tears
125 that you share. It is a good journey! Couples who can laugh
126 together under challenging circumstances and gain the
127 understanding of true friendship keep their marriage vital.

128

129 Addressing Economic Issues

130

131 As you prepare for your new journey as a couple, you have
132 several financial issues to discuss. What financial resources
133 and obligations do you bring into your marriage? Do you have
134 business debts? Will you combine your finances and have joint
135 checking and savings accounts or maintain separate accounts? Who
136 will pay the bills? Will you develop a budget together?

137

138 Talking to each other about how you plan to earn, spend, and
139 save your money is easier when you agree on priorities. Your
140 marriage benefits from forming and sticking to a spending plan
141 that includes discussion and agreement.

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166Sharing Financial Responsibilities

It is wise to make major financial decisions together. You both will be responsible for those decisions. If you are uncomfortable at the thought of sharing financial responsibilities with your intended spouse, you might want to seek premarital counseling to determine underlying issues and to decide if marriage is the right decision for you at this time.

One of you may be better at balancing a checkbook, paying the bills, and developing a budget. As you take this marital journey with your partner, talk with each other about which one of you is best suited to do specific financial tasks. Then, after you are married, try out your new system! Adjust it if it doesn't work well.

Here are some specific financial planning tips. Decide together:

If you will maintain one joint checking account or separate individual checking accounts. Who will pay the bills and maintain the checking account(s)? How often and how much personal allowance each of you should receive. What is an appropriate savings and investment plan? How you will pay for large purchases such as automobiles and major appliances.

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191Building a Budget

Building a budget helps you to know how much income you will have, how much money you will spend, and how much money will be left over. It helps you to control your spending. A budget helps you to save money!

What are some steps to assist you?

1. Identify your financial goals: short range (e.g., buying groceries and gasoline) and long term (e.g., buying a house, setting up a college fund for your children).

2. Look at your current financial position. What is your monthly household income? What are your debts?

3. Write out a monthly budget for 12 months. Write out monthly expenses in the different categories (e.g., \$300 car payment, \$600 rent). Estimate how much you will spend in each category.

4. Compare your budget to your financial goals. Is there money left over after meeting your monthly obligations? If so, how much of the leftover money can be used for your goals? If you follow the budget you set up, how long will it take you to reach your goals?

5. Compare your actual costs to the costs you budgeted. Was your budget realistic?

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192 6. Review and revise your budget. Stay on track toward
193 meeting your joint financial goals.

194 7. Decide who will work, who will provide childcare, and
195 who will obtain further formal education.

196 8. How much insurance will be necessary?

197
198 It is important to make your budget realistic and flexible.
199 Major categories of expenses are: rent or mortgage payment;
200 utilities; food and household goods; clothing; healthcare;
201 insurance premiums; tuition, charitable donations;
202 transportation; household maintenance; credit card debt; hobbies
203 and entertainment; vacation and holiday savings; and other
204 expenses, such as cosmetics, hair care, veterinary fees (if you
205 have pets), gifts, plants, and artwork.

206
207 Certain budget items are fundamental expenditures or
208 "absolutes", such as housing, food, and transportation. Other
209 budget items are less important. Hobbies, vacations, gifts, and
210 artwork are a lower priority than shelter and food. These are
211 "discretionary" expenditures. Prioritize your budget items,
212 starting with "absolutes."

213
214 Involve your spouse in major budget decisions. Talk together
215 about the mutual benefit and impact of your budget decisions.
216 For example, what should you do if one of you wants a new

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217 computer while the other wants new carpet, and there is money
218 for only one of the two items?

219
220 Which of the purchases is most needed and beneficial to both of
221 you? What is the impact on the quality of your life together if
222 you buy the computer? The carpeting? Set your purchasing
223 priorities together. Be a team working towards your shared
224 financial goals.

225
226 Raising a Family

227
228 Deciding to start a family is a BIG decision! The change you
229 experienced when your household became two, triples with the
230 addition of a child! Children bring great joy, sleepless nights,
231 and new roles and responsibilities for both of you.

232
233 Parenthood is a lifetime commitment. It requires emotional
234 maturity from both partners. Raising children can be the most
235 satisfying experience when both of you are ready to make this
236 unselfish commitment.

237
238 Taking Responsibility for Raising Children

239
240 The decision to have children needs to be mutual. Children bring
241 an enormous change to your relationship with each other. Some of

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242 the spontaneity that you once had as a couple may change.
243 Fatigue from early childcare demands and feelings of uncertainty
244 in your new roles can cause temporary marital stress. Career and
245 childcare decisions, economic implications and new financial
246 demands, and new housing requirements will need to be discussed.
247 But the joys of parenthood outweigh the tensions of change.

248
249 Raising a child is a team effort and requires both partners to
250 be active participants. You are bringing into the world a new
251 human being who will require your full support physically,
252 emotionally, socially, instructionally, and economically. Both
253 of you are responsible for your child's care. This mutual
254 responsibility for the care of your child or children never
255 ends. When you agreed to have a child, you signed on for life.

256
257 Coping with Family Challenges

258
259 Sometimes raising children can be very difficult. You may find
260 that you need help. Some children have problems making friends,
261 getting along in school, and staying out of trouble with the
262 law. Family counseling can strengthen families by providing a
263 safe place to explore issues and resolve problems.

264
265 Walking Rocky Roads

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267 If sad times start to outweigh happy times with your spouse, you
268 are walking a lonely, rocky road in your marriage. Examine your
269 own life, your spouse's life, and your relationship with each
270 other. If you and your spouse can renew your love and commitment
271 to each other, together you can remove the obstructions in your
272 marriage. Professional counselors and/or members of the clergy
273 may help you remove some of the boulders in your marriage path.
274 Depending on the type of problems you encounter, you may find
275 specific support groups and counseling classes to help you. Also
276 refer to the phone book or online directories for listings of
277 counselors, support groups, religious organizations, and other
278 community resources.

279
280 Conclusion

281
282 This free handbook is one way that the State of Florida is
283 showing its support of your decision to marry. The information
284 has been intended to be a basic roadmap to guide you. The State
285 of Florida hopes that you have a happy and healthy marriage!

286
287 Again, congratulations!

288
289 (3) The clerk of the circuit court shall post an
290 electronic copy of the handbook on its website. Additionally, if
291 printed copies of the handbook are made available to the office

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292 of the clerk of the circuit court, the clerk shall make the
293 handbook available to marriage license applicants. The clerk of
294 the circuit court is encouraged to provide a list of course
295 providers and sites where marriage and relationship skill-
296 building classes are available.

297 Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (4) of section
298 741.04, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

299 741.04 Issuance of marriage license.-

300 (4) A county court judge or clerk of the circuit court may
301 not issue a license for the marriage of any person unless the
302 county court judge or clerk of the circuit court is first
303 presented with both of the following:

304 (b) A written statement that verifies that both parties
305 have obtained and read or otherwise accessed the information
306 contained in the handbooks ~~handbook~~ or other electronic media
307 presentation of the rights and responsibilities of parties to a
308 marriage specified in s. 741.0306 and s. 741.0307.

309 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.

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311

312

T I T L E A M E N D M E N T

313 Remove everything before the enacting clause and insert:

314 A bill to be entitled
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316 An act relating to the Florida Healthy Marriage
317 Handbook; creating s. 741.0307, F.S.; creating the
318 Florida Healthy Marriage Handbook; providing
319 requirements for the handbook; providing for
320 distribution of printed copies of the handbook under
321 certain circumstances; requiring clerks of court to
322 post electronic copies of the handbook on its website
323 and make the handbook available to certain applicants;
324 encouraging clerks of court to provide a list of
325 course providers and websites where certain classes
326 are available; amending s. 741.04, F.S.; prohibiting
327 the issuance of a marriage license until petitioners
328 verify that both parties have obtained and read the
329 Florida Healthy Marriage Handbook or some other
330 presentation of similar information; providing an
331 effective date.