

By the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; and
Senator Baxley

586-02770-20

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the 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 for the purpose of creating the
6 Florida Guide to a Healthy Marriage; providing for
7 committee operation; providing for appointment of
8 committee members and terms of office; requiring the
9 committee to submit the completed guide to the
10 Governor and the Legislature; providing for committee
11 termination; providing for periodic reconstitution of
12 the committee to review and update the guide;
13 providing requirements for filling vacancies;
14 providing requirements for the guide's content;
15 requiring the committee to oversee the design and
16 layout of the guide and obtain private funds to cover
17 associated costs; authorizing the committee to obtain
18 private funds for the costs of printing and
19 distributing copies of the guide; authorizing the
20 committee to distribute printed copies of the guide
21 under certain circumstances; requiring clerks of court
22 to post an electronic copy of the guide on the court's
23 website and provide printed copies to applicants for
24 marriage licenses under certain circumstances;
25 encouraging clerks of court to provide a list of
26 certain course providers and websites where certain
27 classes are available; providing for periodic review
28 and revision of the guide; requiring the committee to
29 periodically submit a report to the Governor and the

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30 Legislature detailing its revisions to the guide and
31 recommendations for further updates; amending s.
32 741.04, F.S.; prohibiting the issuance of a marriage
33 license until petitioners verify that both parties
34 have obtained and read the Florida Guide to a Healthy
35 Marriage or some other presentation of similar
36 information; deleting a requirement related to the
37 family law handbook to conform a provision to changes
38 made by the act; repealing s. 741.0306, F.S., relating
39 to the creation of a family law handbook; providing an
40 effective date.

41
42 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

43
44 Section 1. Section 741.0307, Florida Statutes, is created
45 to read:

46 741.0307 Marriage Education Committee; Florida Guide to a
47 Healthy Marriage.-

48 (1) There is created within the Department of Children and
49 Families, for administrative purposes only, the Marriage
50 Education Committee for the sole purpose of creating the Florida
51 Guide to a Healthy Marriage. Except as otherwise provided in
52 this section, the committee shall operate in a manner consistent
53 with s. 20.052. The committee shall consist of six marriage
54 education and family advocates, one of whom shall be appointed
55 by the Florida Chapter of the National Association of Social
56 Workers, one of whom shall be appointed by the Florida Family
57 Therapy Association, one of whom shall be appointed by the
58 Florida Mental Health Counseling Association, one of whom shall

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59 be appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be appointed by
60 the President of the Senate, and one of whom shall be appointed
61 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The membership
62 of the committee must reflect the ethnic and gender diversity of
63 the state. The committee shall be appointed by September 1,
64 2020, and the appointees shall each serve a 1-year term or until
65 such time as its work in creating the Florida Guide to a Healthy
66 Marriage has been completed, whichever is earlier. A vacancy on
67 the committee shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the
68 term in the same manner as the original appointment. The
69 committee shall submit the completed guide to the Governor, the
70 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
71 Representatives and terminates with the submission of the guide.
72 The committee shall subsequently be reconstituted once every 10
73 years after July 1, 2020, to review and update the contents of
74 the guide. The reconstituted committee shall consist of six
75 marriage education and family advocates, one of whom shall be
76 appointed by the Florida Chapter of the National Association of
77 Social Workers, one of whom shall be appointed by the Florida
78 Family Therapy Association, one of whom shall be appointed by
79 the Florida Mental Health Counseling Association, one of whom
80 shall be appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be
81 appointed by the President of the Senate, and one of whom shall
82 be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

83 (2) The Florida Guide to a Healthy Marriage must include,
84 but need not be limited to:

85 (a) Resources regarding conflict management, communication
86 skills, family expectations, financial responsibilities and
87 management, domestic violence resources, and parenting

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88 responsibilities.

89 (b) Current information from marriage education and family
90 advocates to assist in forming and maintaining a long-term
91 marital relationship.

92 (c) Information regarding premarital education, marriage
93 enrichment education, and resources that are available to help
94 restore a marriage that is potentially moving toward
95 dissolution.

96 (d) Contact information and website links to additional
97 resources and local professional and community services to
98 further assist a marital relationship.

99 (3) The committee shall oversee the design and layout of
100 the guide. The committee shall raise funds from private sources
101 to cover the costs of the design and layout. The committee may
102 raise funds from private sources to cover the costs of printing
103 and distributing copies of the guide. If sufficient funds are
104 not raised to cover the costs of printing and distribution, the
105 committee is not required to print or distribute copies of the
106 guide.

107 (4) The clerk of the circuit court in each judicial circuit
108 shall post an electronic copy of the guide on its website.
109 Additionally, if the committee provides printed copies of the
110 guide to the office of the clerk of the circuit court, the clerk
111 must make the guide available to marriage license applicants.
112 The clerk of the circuit court is encouraged to provide a list
113 of course providers and sites where marriage and relationship
114 skill-building classes are available.

115 (5) The committee shall review the guide and provide a
116 report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the

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117 Speaker of the House of Representatives every 10 years, or as
118 soon thereafter as practicable, detailing changes made to the
119 guide and recommending further updates.

120 Section 2. Subsection (4) of section 741.04, Florida
121 Statutes, is amended to read:

122 741.04 Issuance of marriage license.—

123 (4) A county court judge or clerk of the circuit court may
124 not issue a license for the marriage of any person unless the
125 county court judge or clerk of the circuit court is first
126 presented with both of the following:

127 (a) A written statement, signed by both parties, which
128 specifies whether the parties, individually or together, have
129 completed a premarital preparation course.

130 (b) A ~~written~~ statement that verifies that both parties
131 have obtained and read or otherwise accessed the information
132 contained in the Florida Guide to a Healthy Marriage, as created
133 under s. 741.0307, or some other presentation of information
134 regarding conflict management, communication skills, family
135 expectations, financial responsibilities and management,
136 domestic violence resources, and parenting responsibilities
137 ~~handbook or other electronic media presentation of the rights~~
138 ~~and responsibilities of parties to a marriage specified in s.~~
139 ~~741.0306.~~

140 Section 3. Section 741.0306, F.S., is repealed.

141 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.