

**First Regular Session
Sixty-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

PREAMENDED

*This Unofficial Version Includes Committee
Amendments Not Yet Adopted on Second Reading*

LLS NO. 01-0754.01 Debbie Haskins

SENATE BILL 01-175

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Cairns,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

(None),

Senate Committees

Judiciary

Appropriations

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING RECOGNITION OF THE BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not necessarily reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted.)

Allows the state registrar of vital statistics ("state registrar") to issue a certificate of commendation recognizing long-term marriages to couples who have been married twenty-five years or fifty years. Allows one or both of the parties to the marriage or a relative or friend of the married couple to request the certificate. Directs that the applicant submit a marriage certificate or other documentation of the marriage to the state registrar. States that the certificate should bear the signature of the governor and the state registrar.

States that no fees shall be charged for such a certificate, but allows

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.

Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.

Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

the state registrar to accept private gifts, grants, and donations to pay for the costs of issuing the certificates. Directs that such moneys be credited to the vital statistics records cash fund.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** Article 2 of title 25, Colorado Revised Statutes, is
3 amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SECTION to read:

4 **25-2-107.5. Marriages - legislative declaration - certificates of**
5 **commendations - application.** (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY
6 FINDS THAT THE STATE SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUALS,
7 FAMILIES, AND TO SOCIETY OF COUPLES WHO HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR
8 COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER AND THEIR FAMILIES BY REMAINING
9 MARRIED. WITH DIVORCE RATES INCREASING AND THE WELL-DOCUMENTED
10 EVIDENCE OF HARM TO CHILDREN OF DIVORCED FAMILIES, THE GENERAL
11 ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE OF COLORADO
12 TO COMMEND THOSE COUPLES WHO HAVE REMAINED MARRIED FOR
13 TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND FOR FIFTY YEARS. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
14 ALSO FINDS THAT IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE OF COLORADO TO
15 ENCOURAGE LONG-TERM MARRIAGE AND TO RECOGNIZE THE MARRIED
16 FAMILY AS A POSITIVE AND ESSENTIAL INFLUENCE TOWARD THE
17 WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT THE
18 STATE'S RECOGNITION OF THE BENEFITS OF LONG-TERM MARRIAGE WILL
19 ALSO HELP YOUNGER INDIVIDUALS VIEW MARRIAGE IN MORE POSITIVE
20 TERMS, SINCE STUDIES SHOW THAT PEOPLE ARE MARRYING LATER IN LIFE,
21 FEWER ARE GETTING MARRIED, AND THOSE WHO DO MARRY ARE MORE AND
22 MORE LIKELY TO DIVORCE.

23 (2) THE STATE REGISTRAR SHALL DEVELOP A CERTIFICATE OF
24 COMMENDATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES WHO HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR

1 TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OR FOR FIFTY YEARS. SUCH CERTIFICATE SHALL
2 STRESS THE BENEFITS OF LONG-TERM MARRIAGE AND RECOGNIZE THE
3 PARTICULAR MARRIED COUPLE FOR BEING MARRIED IN A LONG-TERM
4 MARRIAGE. EACH CERTIFICATE SHALL INCLUDE A SIGNATURE OR FACSIMILE
5 SIGNATURE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE STATE REGISTRAR.

6 (3) THE STATE REGISTRAR SHALL ISSUE A CERTIFICATE OF
7 COMMENDATION TO A MARRIED COUPLE IF THE PERSON REQUESTING THE
8 CERTIFICATE SUBMITS A COPY OF THE COUPLE'S MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE OR
9 A COPY OF A BIBLE PAGE OR OTHER FAMILY DOCUMENT THAT PROVIDES A
10 RECORD OF THE COUPLE'S MARRIAGE. SUCH APPLICATION MAY BE FILED BY
11 ONE OR BOTH OF THE PARTIES TO THE MARRIAGE OR BY A RELATIVE OR
12 FRIEND OF THE MARRIED COUPLE. THE STATE REGISTRAR SHALL COLLECT
13 A REASONABLE FEE BASED UPON THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS OF
14 PREPARING AND ISSUING THE CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION. UPON
15 RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION AND
16 PAYMENT OF THE FEE, THE STATE REGISTRAR SHALL PREPARE A
17 CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION AND MAIL THE CERTIFICATE == TO THE
18 PERSON REQUESTING THE CERTIFICATE.

19 **SECTION 2.** 25-2-121 (2) (b), Colorado Revised Statutes, is
20 amended BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW SUBPARAGRAPH to read:

21 **25-2-121. Fee adjustments - vital statistics records cash fund**
22 **created.** (2) (b) (III) THE STATE REGISTRAR IS AUTHORIZED TO ASSESS A
23 REASONABLE FEE FOR CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION ISSUED PURSUANT
24 TO SECTION 25-2-107.5 BASED UPON THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS OF
25 ISSUING THE CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION. THE STATE REGISTRAR
26 MAY ALSO ACCEPT GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS FOR THE EXPENSES OF
27 ISSUING CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION. SUCH FEES AND GIFTS,

1 GRANTS, AND DONATIONS SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE VITAL STATISTICS
2 CASH FUND, CREATED IN THIS PARAGRAPH (b), AND ARE SUBJECT TO
3 APPROPRIATION BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM SUCH CASH FUND TO
4 PAY FOR THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ISSUANCE
5 OF CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 25-2-107.5.

6 **SECTION 3. Effective date.** This act shall take effect at 12:01
7 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after
8 final adjournment of the general assembly that is allowed for submitting
9 a referendum petition pursuant to article V, section 1 (3) of the state
10 constitution; except that, if a referendum petition is filed against this act
11 or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act,
12 item, section, or part, if approved by the people, shall take effect on the
13 date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by proclamation of the
14 governor.