2001 ASSEMBLY BILL 753

January 28, 2002 – Introduced by Representatives Wood, Gundrum, Suder, Nass, GROTHMAN, LADWIG, KRAWCZYK, J. FITZGERALD, ALBERS, LEIBHAM, FREESE, HOVEN, GUNDERSON, VRAKAS, F. LASEE, KESTELL, PETTIS, SERATTI, URBAN, M. LEHMAN, HINES, HUNDERTMARK, OLSEN, McCORMICK, MUSSER, HUEBSCH, PETROWSKI, AINSWORTH, STARZYK, HAHN, OTT, TOWNSEND, OWENS, BIES, FRISKE, LOEFFELHOLZ, D. MEYER, DUFF, SYKORA, RYBA and KREIBICH, cosponsored by Senators S. Fitzgerald, Schultz, Zien, Lazich, A. Lasee, Roessler, Welch and HUELSMAN, by request of Family Research Forum and Family Research Institute. Referred to Committee on Family Law.

- AN ACT *to renumber and amend* 765.01; and *to create* 765.01 (2), 990.01 (19p) 1
- 2 and 990.01 (39) of the statutes; relating to: defining marriage and recognizing 3

valid marriages.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Current law provides that marriage is a civil contract that creates the legal status of husband and wife. The consent of the parties is essential, and the parties must have the legal capacity to enter into a contract. In addition, current law prohibits certain marriages, such as a marriage between persons who are nearer of kin than second cousins or a marriage in which at least one of the persons was divorced less than six months before the marriage. If a person who is prohibited from marrying in this state leaves the state for the purpose of contracting a marriage in a state where the marriage is valid, that marriage is void in this state. Such a person will be considered to have left this state for the purpose of marrying in the other state if he or she lived in this state within 12 months before marrying in the other state and resumed residence in this state within 18 months after leaving this state, or if he or she maintained a residence in this state the entire time that he or she was away.

This bill specifies that marriage is a civil contract between one man and one woman. The bill provides that only if a marriage is between one man and one woman will the marriage be recognized as valid in this state, regardless of whether the marriage took place in a jurisdiction that defined marriage other than between one man and one woman as valid, and regardless of whether the statute regarding marrying in another state to circumvent the marriage laws of this state applies to

ASSEMBLY BILL 753

16

the marriage. The bill provides definitions for "spouse" and "marriage" for purposes of statutory construction. A "spouse" is defined as a party to the marriage, and "marriage" is defined as a civil contract between one man and one woman that creates the legal status for the parties of husband and wife.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **Section 1.** 765.01 of the statutes is renumbered 765.01 (1) and amended to 2 read: 3 765.01 (1) Marriage, so far as its validity at law is concerned, is a civil contract 4 between one man and one woman, to which the consent of the parties capable in law 5 of contracting is essential, and which creates the legal status of husband and wife. 6 **SECTION 2.** 765.01 (2) of the statutes is created to read: 7 765.01 (2) Regardless of whether s. 765.04 applies and regardless of whether 8 a marriage takes place in another jurisdiction in which marriage other than between 9 one man and one woman is defined as valid, only marriage between one man and one 10 woman shall be recognized as valid in this state. 11 **Section 3.** 990.01 (19p) of the statutes is created to read: 12 990.01 (19p) MARRIAGE. "Marriage" means a civil contract between one man 13 and one woman that creates the legal status for the parties of husband and wife. 14 **Section 4.** 990.01 (39) of the statutes is created to read: 15 990.01 (39) Spouse. "Spouse" means a party to a marriage.

(END)