



2021 SENATE BILL 14

January 28, 2021 - Introduced by Senators KOOYENGA, CARPENTER, FELZKOWSKI, MARKLEIN, NASS, ROTH and L. TAYLOR, cosponsored by Representatives TUSLER, DUCHOW, ROZAR, SKOWRONSKI and SUBECK. Referred to Committee on Insurance, Licensing and Forestry.

1 **AN ACT** *to amend* 765.16 (1m) (d) and 765.16 (2m); and *to create* 765.16 (1m)
2 (g) of the statutes; **relating to:** justices or judges authorized to officiate a
3 marriage.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, a marriage is validly solemnized and contracted in this state after a marriage license has been issued and the two parties mutually declare, before an authorized officiating person and two witnesses, that they take each other as each other's spouse. The following persons are authorized officiating persons:

1. An ordained member of the clergy.
2. A licentiate of a denominational body or an appointee of a bishop serving as the regular member of the clergy of any church of the denomination to which the member of the clergy belongs.
3. The two marrying parties themselves, by mutual declaration that they take each other as each other's spouse.
4. A judge of a court of record, reserve judge, or municipal judge.
5. A circuit court commissioner.

This bill adds a *mej koob*, in accordance with traditional Hmong wedding ceremony customs, to the list of who may officiate at a marriage. A *mej koob* is an individual in Hmong culture who negotiates a marriage between the families of the future bride and groom. A *mej koob* also conducts the wedding celebration and ensures that the traditional Hmong cultural customs and rituals are followed during the celebration.

