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Committees:

- Finance – *Ranking Minority Member*
- Agriculture
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Finance – General Government & Agency Review Subcommittee
- Government Oversight and Reform
- Judiciary

Before the Senate Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs Committee
Senate Bill 52 –Solemnize Marriage: Broaden
Sponsor Testimony by Senator Michael J. Skindell
June 27, 2017

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on SB 52. I introduced this bill in the 131st General Assembly as SB 50. The goal of SB 52 is to broaden the category of those who may solemnize marriages in the state.

Many people who seek to get married are not affiliated with a church or religious organization. This legislation will provide convenience to these citizens for the solemnization of marriages without having to go through the various public officials who may solemnize such as judges or mayors. Generally speaking, encouraging marriage is good public policy.

Under current law, those who may solemnize marriages in Ohio are ordained or licensed ministers of any religious society or congregation within the state who are licensed to do so, a municipal judge, a county judge a probate judge, a mayor of a municipal corporation in a county where it wholly or partially lies, the superintendent of the state school for the deaf and any religious society in conformity with the rules of its church. This legislation provides that any other person or entity that has registered to solemnize marriages with the Ohio Secretary of State may also do so.

Once a person wishing to solemnize marriage registers with the Secretary of State, he or she will be issued a license to perform these ceremonies. This allows for greater freedom and flexibility for those wishing to be married to have it solemnized, in particular those who are not affiliated with a church or religious community.

Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for your consideration of SB 52. I would be happy to answer any questions relating to this legislation.