



State of Wisconsin
2015 - 2016 LEGISLATURE

LRB-3984/1
SWB:emw

2015 ASSEMBLY BILL 946

February 23, 2016 – Introduced by Representatives C. TAYLOR, KAHL, BERCEAU, POPE, SUBECK, SINICKI and ZEPNICK, cosponsored by Senators MILLER and BEWLEY. Referred to Committee on Family Law.

1 **AN ACT to amend** 765.16 (2m); and **to create** 765.002 (2m), 765.002 (5m) and
2 765.16 (1m) (g) of the statutes; **relating to:** persons authorized to officiate at
3 a marriage.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill authorizes a civil celebrant to officiate at a marriage. The bill defines a “civil celebrant” as an individual who is authorized by a secular organization to solemnize marriages or civil unions. A “secular organization” under the bill is an organization whose members subscribe to secular values, beliefs, and practices and that is not affiliated with or controlled by a church or particular religious authority. 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, reserve judge, or municipal judge; and 5) a circuit court

