

Before the  
**House Rules Committee**

February 25, 2013

**House Bill 2413**

Testimony of  
Anthony Behrens

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Hoyle, Vice Chair Hicks and members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Anthony Behrens. I appreciate the Committee taking the time to hear my testimony today about House Bill 2413, and I thank Representative Cameron for sponsoring this bill.

To provide you with some background about me, I am a resident of Salem and have lived in Oregon my entire life. I am a graduate of South Salem High School, Willamette University, and Willamette University College of Law.

From 2005 to 2007 I was employed as a Circuit Court Judge Pro Tem. In that capacity I began officiating weddings and have kept doing it ever since. In the last seven years, I have solemnized well over 1,000 weddings throughout Oregon, including one here in this very building.

Almost without fail, the couples I encounter have experienced significant difficulty finding a trustworthy, qualified wedding officiant. Aside from the practical issues this presents, there are some significant consumer protection issues that are implicated. The wedding officiant is charged by statute with filing the license. The marriage license has every piece of information necessary to steal both the bride's and groom's identities. Included with my testimony is a redacted copy of a marriage license my testimony. As you can see, the license for both the bride and the groom, requests mothers' maiden name, social security numbers,

dates of birth, occupations, signatures, and addresses. A wedding officiant has unfettered access to this information because he or she completes and files the license after the wedding. Most counties provide officiants a copy of the license (though usually without the social security number information at the bottom, for the officiant's records). Most couples don't even realize or consider that their officiant is going to have this information.

Unless the couple is a member of a church or happens to know someone, they essentially have to turn to a stranger. Many couples seek officiants on Craigslist or other internet sites, and as you can imagine there is no assurance that the officiant is going to show up to the wedding, let alone keep the couple's personal information safe.

Judges are one of the best available alternatives for trustworthy officiants. In my experience, however, relatively few judges officiate weddings outside or even inside the courthouse, given their workload and the value they typically place on their limited free time. To give you an example, I married a couple from Multnomah County a couple of weeks ago at a Starbucks here in town. They had tried to schedule a wedding with a Multnomah county judge, but found that the earliest available appointment was more than two months out. By then, their marriage license, which is good for 60 days, would have expired.

The primary goal of House Bill 2413 is to give Oregonians better access to a greater pool of trustworthy wedding officiants – people who have demonstrated a commitment to public service and the public trust. In a number of counties, the county clerk provides a list of judges who officiate weddings in the county. I've attached an example of such a list to my testimony. HB 2413 would require counties that keep such a list to expand it to include former circuit judge pro tems and former county clerks who

- Request to be included in the list;

- Reside in the county; and
- Demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of the county clerk that they have not been convicted of a misdemeanor involving dishonesty or a felony.

HB 2413 does not require counties that don't maintain a list to create one, and it doesn't prevent counties from ceasing to maintain a list if they wish to do so.

By providing greater access to trustworthy officiants to Oregon consumers, HB 2413 will provide greater protection for Oregonians at NO cost to the state and insignificant inconvenience to the counties.

I hope that you will support HB 2413 for the reasons I've outlined today. I thank you again for allowing me to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

LOCAL OFFICIAL

County MULTNOMAH License Effective On or After 0 License Expires (Month, Day, Year)

GROOM

1. Groom's Name First Middle Last

2. Birthplace (State or Foreign Country) 3. Date of Birth (Month, Day, Year) 4. Age (18 or older, 17 with consent)

5. Sex 6. Occupation 7. Previous Marital Status (Single, Widowed, Divorced)

8a. Father's Name (First, Middle, Legal Surname Prior to 1st Marriage) 8b. Birthplace (State or Foreign Country)

9a. Mother's Name (First, Middle, Legal Surname Prior to 1st Marriage) 9b. Birthplace (State or Foreign Country)

10a. Groom's Address Street and Number City or Town State/Country Zip 10b. County of Residence

11. Groom's Legal Name Taken After Marriage First Middle Last

CONSENT FORM WAIVER

BRIDE

12a. Bride's Name First Middle Last

12b. Maiden Surname (If different) 12c. Previous Name (If different)

13. Birthplace (State or Foreign Country) 14. Date of Birth (Month, Day, Year) 15. Age (18 or older, 17 with consent)

16. Sex 17. Occupation 18. Previous Marital Status (Single, Widowed, Divorced)

19a. Father's Name (First, Middle, Legal Surname Prior to 1st Marriage) 19b. Birthplace (State or Foreign Country)

20a. Mother's Name (First, Middle, Legal Surname Prior to 1st Marriage) 20b. Birthplace (State or Foreign Country)

21a. Bride's Address Street and Number City or Town State/Country Zip 21b. County of Residence

22. Bride's Legal Name Taken After Marriage First Middle Last

CONSENT FORM WAIVER

AFFIDAVIT OF AGE

23.  Bride Name and Address Affiant

24.  Groom Name and Address Affiant

SIGNATURES

*We hereby certify that the information provided is correct to the best of our knowledge and belief and that we are free to marry under the laws of this state.*

25. Groom's Legal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Bride's Legal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Neither you nor your spouse is the property of the other. The Laws of the State of Oregon affirm your right to enter into marriage and at the same time to live within the marriage free from violence and abuse.*

LICENSE TO MARRY

This license authorizes the marriage in this state of the parties named above by any person duly authorized to perform a marriage ceremony under the laws of the State of Oregon.

27. Date License Issued 28. Signature of Issuing Official 29. Title of Issuing Official DEPUTY

30a. Date of Marriage 30b. Where Married - (City, Town or Location) Portland 30c. County OREGON

CEREMONY

31a. I certify that the above named persons were married on the date listed above (30a). Signature of Person Performing Ceremony (Officiant) \_\_\_\_\_ 31b. Title \_\_\_\_\_


31c. Print Name and Address of Officiant (Person Performing Ceremony) Name: Anthony A. Behrens Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

31d. Name and Address of the Authorizing Religious Congregation or Organization of Officiant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_


32. Witness Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Witness Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL OFFICIAL

34. Signature of County Official \_\_\_\_\_ 35. Date Filed by County Official (Month, Day, Year) \_\_\_\_\_



## Judges Available For Marriage Ceremonies



Judge Burton	English and Spanish weddings at the Courthouse only, Tuesday through Friday only.  Last minute if calendar allows. Schedule through staff.	503-584-7713
Judge Vance D. Day	English and Spanish weddings (translator required by bride and groom), ceremonies performed in and outside of Courthouse.  Last minute if schedule allows. Schedule through staff.	503-588-5026
Judge Hart	English weddings in or out of the Courthouse, weekdays and weekends. Schedule through staff.	503-584-7749
Judge James	English weddings in or out of the Courthouse. Schedule through staff.	503-373-4303
Retired Judge Richard Barber	<a href="mailto:bdickbarber@comcast.net">bdickbarber@comcast.net</a> English only weddings; outside of Courthouse.	503-364-2043
Municipal Court Judge A. Carl Myers	English weddings only at Keizer Municipal Court.	503-399-9219
Municipal Court Judge Janice Zyryanoff	North Marion Justice Court Woodburn; English, Spanish and Russian Weddings.	503-951-0177