

Dear Honorable Committee Members, (I am not sure I can attend the hearing, so am submitting these comments)

I am an atheist and urge you to support my rights as a non-religious person to allow those of us who do not believe there is a god to be married by a person of our choice who has meaning to us. Not allowing this is a form of discrimination.

Over 20 years ago when my husband and I got married, we had to seek out the least religious "minister" who could find who could legally marry people, since we wanted a meaningful ceremony. The service went ok, but the minister did not know us and forgot our names at the time of pronouncing us man and wife/ wife and man. We would have much preferred to have someone more of our choosing read the vows we wrote for ourselves and pronounce our commitments.

Please move this bill out of committee for a vote. Atheists are good, usually scientifically minded people. Non-religious people helped establish our nation and our constitution supports separation of church and state, and not upholding one religion over another. This means that non-believers should not be discriminated against when it comes to the state recognizing things like marriage.

There are many religions whose tenants make far less sense than a rational non-bellief in an unprovable god makes. Many "ministers" get their certificates via some very questionable sources as long as they apparently pay a fee. It makes no sense, therefore, to require a "minister" or rabbi or some other form of religious celebrant to officially marry a couple and avoid the higher fee for a license.

Please move this bill our to committee.

Laurel Hines, Salem, Oregon