

Report on Public Policy Position

Name of section:

Family Law Section

Contact person:

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Bill Number:

[SB 0546](#) (Hunter) Family law; marriage and divorce; prerequisites for issuance of a marriage license; require premarriage program or longer waiting period. Amends title & secs. 3 & 3a of [1887 PA 128](#) (MCL [551.103](#) & [551.103a](#)) & adds sec. 2a & 2b.

Date position was adopted:

November 5, 2011

Process used to take the ideological position:

Position adopted after discussion and vote at a scheduled meeting.

Number of members in the decision-making body:

21

Number who voted in favor and opposed to the position:

18 Voted for position

1 Voted against position

0 Abstained from vote

2 Did not vote

Position:

Oppose

Explanation of the position, including any recommended amendments:

SB 546 extends the waiting period between marriage license application and delivery from 3 days to 28 days, unless the parties complete a premarital education program. The program shall include conflict management, communication skills, financial matters, and child and parenting responsibilities. License applicants over 50 years of age are exempted from the education requirement, and the parents of minor applicants must also attend premarital education. The Family Law Section supports making premarital education available to applicants, but believes that the decision on premarital education should be made by the parties, not by the state. The section is also concerned that constructing impediments to marriage would discourage marriages and lead to more children born out of wedlock. The Family Law Section opposes this bill.

The text of any legislation, court rule, or administrative regulation that is the subject of or referenced in this report.

<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2011-SB-0546>