

HB 144 -- MARRIAGE LICENSES

SPONSOR: DeGroot

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill allows the Recorder of Deeds to accept electronic applications for marriage licenses through an online process. If a recorder uses an online process to accept applications for or to issue marriage licenses and the applicants' identity has not been verified in person, the Recorder must have a two-step verification process or a process that independently verifies the identity of the applicants. It is the Recorder's responsibility to ensure that any verification process adopted as part of the electronic system verifies the identities of both applicants. The Recorder must not accept applications for or issue licenses through this online process unless at least one of the applicants is a resident of the county or city not within a county in which the application was submitted.

This bill is the same as HCS HB 1972 (2020).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this catches the Office of the Recorder of Deeds up with technology, which is especially helpful in the age of COVID. It helps that people do not have to show up to the office anymore because you can verify your identity online and apply online. This bill will be a benefit to the people they serve, in the city of St. Louis. They serve several hundred people a day in St. Louis and this would help cut down traffic in the office. This will not totally do away with people going into the office personally, and they do not want to stop all in-person traffic; they would like to help cut down on it, however. If they cannot be verified online, they will be required to come in and verify identity. No other states are doing this.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Degroot; Recorders Association of Missouri; and Steven Webb, St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.