



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007  
**Introducer's Statement of Intent**  
**LB 696**

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**Chairperson:** Brad Ashford  
**Committee:** Judiciary  
**Date of Hearing:** March 1, 2007

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

Legislative Bill 696 would create an incentive to encourage couples planning to get married to complete eight hours of marriage education.

Currently, in Nebraska the marriage license fee is \$15 with no waiting period. LB 696 allows those who complete eight hours of marriage education to maintain the current fee with no waiting period as an incentive. If you have not completed at least eight hours of marriage education, the marriage license fee would be \$100, with a 30-day waiting period.

The bill would require, as proof of completion, a certificate signed by the provider of the marriage education on a form indicating the couple has completed at least eight hours of marriage education, and present it to the county clerk.

Marriage education could be provided by any of the following:

- An official representative of a religious institution or his or her designee
- Any member of the clergy authorized to perform marriages, or his or her designee, including mentor couples or other lay volunteers if they are working in a clergy-supervised program
- Any marriage education provider or program approved by the person performing the marriage, or
- Marriage education or skills training providers listed in directories, which shall be maintained by each county clerk's office

The marriage education courses would be required to cover at least four main topics:

- Conflict management in marriage
- Communication skills
- Financial responsibility, and
- Parenting skills

In addition, LB 696 would give county clerks the ability to waive the \$100 fee and the 30-day waiting period when presented with compelling circumstances such as terminal illness, or imminent transfer to a combat zone.

Finally, the bill includes an operative date of January 1, 2008.

**Principal Introducer:**

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**Senator Mark Christensen**