

**SUBJECT:** Including Muslim imams in list of who may conduct a marriage ceremony

**COMMITTEE:** Juvenile Justice and Family Issues — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — Neave, Swanson, Cook, Frank, Leach, Ramos, Talarico, Vasut,  
Wu

0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — Insiya Aziz, Emgage Action; (*Registered, but did not testify:*  
Richard Evans, Emgage Action; Susana Carranza; Idona Griffith; Vanessa  
MacDougal; Robert Norris)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Anna Alkire; Beth Maynard;  
Ruth York)

**BACKGROUND:** Family Code sec. 2.202(a) grants the authority to conduct a marriage ceremony to a licensed or ordained Christian minister or priest, a Jewish rabbi, an officer of a religious organization who is authorized by the organization to conduct a marriage ceremony, and active and retired state justices, judges, and magistrates.

**DIGEST:** HB 2039 would add Muslim imams to the list of persons authorized to perform a marriage ceremony in Texas.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 2039 would recognize Texas's large and growing Muslim population by adding Muslim imams to the list of persons authorized to conduct a marriage ceremony in the state. While imams fall under the general category of those who can perform marriage ceremonies as an "officer of a religious organization," they are not included by name in the current statute as priests, Christian ministers, and Jewish rabbis are.

HB 2039 would clarify current law and eliminate confusion for Muslim leaders. Currently, about 500,000 Muslims call Texas home. Beyond

resolving an ambiguity in current law, the bill appropriately and equitably recognizes a large and important religious group in Texas by formally including Muslim imams among those authorized to celebrate marriages.

CRITICS  
SAY:

No concerns identified.