

Supervisor wants authority to perform marriages

By Frank DeFrank

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Maybe Clinton Township Supervisor Robert Cannon and state Rep. Anthony Forlini are just romantics at heart.

At Cannon's urging, Forlini has introduced a bill in the state House that would permit township supervisors to perform marriage ceremonies.

If approved, the bill would put supervisors on equal footing with mayors, judges and a few other public officials who can legally perform marriages.

"I had a cousin who wanted me to marry his daughter," Cannon said. "I wasn't able to do it. I would have been proud to have done it."

When he learned supervisors hearing vows was verboten, Cannon first sought out the Michigan Townships Association to figure out how he might remedy the situation.

The best advice he got from that source: become an ordained minister.

"Almost every one of them went online and became a minister for \$85 and 15 minutes of work," Cannon said.

But the Clinton Township government boss wasn't interested in that option.

So his next step was to contact Forlini, who received similar requests when he was supervisor of Harrison Township.

"I had to look it up and see if we did it (performed marriages)," Forlini said. "We didn't."

So Forlini got busy and drafted a bill. Last month,

If approved, the bill would put supervisors on equal footing with mayors, judges and a few other public officials who can legally perform marriages.

he introduced the proposed legislation.

"This ... will finally give township supervisors and mayors equal authority to perform marriage ceremonies," Forlini wrote in his regular newsletter.

The bill was assigned to the House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors, a panel that includes Forlini as a member. A meeting of the committee is scheduled for Wednesday. Cannon is among those invited to testify.

"I'm going to go up there and tell them periodically I'm asked to marry people," Cannon said.

"Why do mayors get to marry people and supervisors can't?"

If Forlini's bill becomes law, township boards would be permitted to establish a fee for those who wish to be married by a supervisor.

The money would be put in the township's general fund.

"The supervisor will not make any money in this deal," Cannon said.

That doesn't mean he won't benefit.

"All I want out of it is a meal," Cannon quipped.



Cannon



Forlini