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**The Celebrant Foundation & Institute
Recognizes Legislative Sponsors of NJ Certified Civil Celebrant Law**

Life-Cycle Celebrants® from the Celebrant Foundation & Institute Gather at NJ State House to Publicly Thank Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula and Senator Loretta Weinberg for Paving the Way for Adoption of NJ's Historic Civil Celebrant Law

Trenton, NJ – Life-Cycle Celebrants® assembled at the New Jersey's State House today to recognize state leaders who pioneered the passage of legislation that made New Jersey the first state in the nation to allow Certified Civil Celebrants to legally solemnize marriages. The authorizing legislation—sponsored by Senator Loretta Weinberg and Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula—was signed into law by Governor Chris Christie on January 19, 2014. The law took effect May 1.

Life-Cycle Celebrants® are graduates of the Celebrant Foundation & Institute (CF&I), the nation's preeminent, online, educational institute headquartered in Montclair, NJ dedicated to teaching and certifying people as ceremony professionals. Through the CF&I's seven-month, web-based program, Celebrant faculty teach students how to masterfully co-create and perform personalized ceremonies for weddings, funerals and other life events that reflect the needs, beliefs and values of the people they are honoring. The high-level of training Life-Cycle Celebrants® receive at the CF&I is one of the eligibility requirements for registration with the State under the new Civil Celebrant law.

“The Celebrant Foundation & Institute is grateful for Assemblyman Chivukula’s and Senator Weinberg’s leadership and vision to give couples of all backgrounds, traditions, cultures and faiths greater choice in how they want to begin their life together,” remarked Charlotte Eulette, International Director of the CF&I. “New Jersey’s Civil Celebrant Law recognizes the changing face of “family” by providing more pathways to honor love and life. And by requiring Celebrants to undergo thorough professional training, the law helps ensure families who choose the Civil Celebrant path will receive the meaningful, tailored ceremonies they deserve.”

Passage of New Jersey’s Civil Celebrant law couldn’t be timelier with the need for Celebrants on the rise. Recent Pew Studies reveal that a growing number of people aren’t connected to a specific religion and that many are not religious at all, yet they still consider themselves spiritual. Life-Cycle Celebrants® offer an alternative for these couples. They fill the void by offering customized ceremonies to people who may choose not to have a wedding ceremony and celebration otherwise.

“With New Jersey’s Civil Celebrant Law in place, the Garden State is now ‘Open for Business’ to these couples who wish to engage Wedding Celebrants,” continued Eulette. “Local wedding vendors and venues will no doubt benefit with more couples opting to spend their dollars right here. Celebrant ceremonies in NJ already generate approximately \$248 million to the State’s economy. Under the new law, there’s no questions these numbers are going to boom. Weddings are big business, and now New Jersey has a competitive edge,” she concluded.

The new law is also a job-creator. With the number of couples seeking wedding ceremonies outside the confines of traditional religious institutions expected to continue to increase, so will the need for the professionals to serve them. The New Jersey Law opens the door for more people to enter this growing Civil Celebrant career path, which is as personally-fulfilling as it is financially rewarding. On average, NJ-area Celebrants charge anywhere from \$600-\$1,200 per wedding ceremony and book anywhere between 20 to 100 ceremonies a year. It’s a viable, flexible career, especially for those who love people and value being their own boss.

“It couldn’t be a more exciting time to be a Life-Cycle Celebrant®,” said Dorry Bless of Milford, NJ, a 2006 CF&I graduate. “To work in a profession that makes a positive impact on peoples’ lives and is growing in our rapidly evolving economy seems almost too good to be true. NJ’s law is a testament to the important work we do and a beacon of the continued expansion of the Celebrant movement across the US.”

Celebrancy originated in Australia and New Zealand more than 40 years ago and was instituted by the late attorney general Lionel Murphy into the Australian law. Today, celebrants are part of the very fabric of society in that region with the majority of weddings, funeral and family ceremonies being performed by civil celebrants. In 2001, the Celebrant Foundation & Institute was founded as the official North American Chapter of the International Federation of Celebrants originated in Australia. As an educational nonprofit, the CF&I has proudly grown over the years with graduates performing ceremonies in nearly every state across the country, as well as in Canada, Mexico, Europe and Asia.

“This measure empowers certified celebrants to provide personalized ceremonies that mark an important milestone in a person’s life that reflect the individual needs, beliefs, and values of the person, couple, or family,” said Assembly Deputy Speaker Upendra Chivukula (D-17). “It does so by authorizing individuals who have been professionally trained in an academic program in the art of celebration, symbolism, and tradition to solemnize marriages or civil unions. This measure also creates jobs and economic opportunity, a win-win for all,” he concluded.

About the Celebrant Foundation & Institute

The Celebrant Foundation & Institute (CF&I) is the nation’s preeminent online educational institute that teaches and certifies people as modern day ceremony professionals called Life-Cycle Celebrants®. Founded by Philanthropists Gaile and Pat Sarma in 2001, the educational nonprofit organization headquartered in Montclair, NJ, is a member of the International Federation of Celebrants. To date, the CF&I has graduated Life-Cycle Celebrants® who preside over 30,000 ceremonies each year throughout North America, Asia and Europe. To learn more about the CF&I, visit www.celebrantinstitute.org

About Life-Cycle Celebrants®

Life-Cycle Celebrants® are certified graduates of the Celebrant Foundation & Institute. Through the CF&I’s seven-month, web-based educational program, students are rigorously schooled in the art of ritual, ceremony, world and faith traditions, mythology, ceremonial writing and public speaking. Through the programs, they learn how to officiate at virtually every life event with a focus on personalizing each ceremony to reflect the needs, beliefs and values of the couple or family. Ceremonies include weddings, funerals, baby and parenting, adoptions, and all other events honoring the milestones in peoples’ lives.

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