

**ISSUANCE OF MARRIAGE LICENSE WITHOUT PUBLICITY (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 180 of 1897**

**551.204 Privileged communications; violation of confidence as misdemeanor; publicity as misdemeanor; penalties; libel action; neglecting to make proper return; section inapplicable to license unsealed under section 3(2) or (3).**

Sec. 4.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2), all knowledge of facts that come to the judge of probate, state registrar or an agent or employee of the state registrar, the physician endorsing the application, or a witness to the marriage under the license issued under this act is privileged communications. A violation of confidence by the judge of probate, state registrar or an agent or employee of the state registrar, the physician, or a witness is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not less than \$25.00, nor more than \$100.00, plus the costs of prosecution, and, in default of the payment, imprisonment for not more than 3 months. An editor, publisher, or proprietor of a newspaper or publication within this state giving publicity to a license or marriage performed under this act is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$50.00, nor more than \$100.00, plus the costs of prosecution, and, in default of the payment, imprisonment for not more than 30 days. In addition, the editor, publisher, or proprietor is liable in an action of libel to the parties married under the license. If the judge of probate performing the marriage ceremony under a license issued under this act neglects to make proper return, the judge shall be fined, in addition to penalties prescribed by the laws of this state, not more than \$50.00.

(2) This section does not apply to a license that is unsealed under section 3(2) or (3).

**History:** 1897, Act 180, Eff. Aug. 30, 1897 ;-- CL 1897, 8615 ;-- CL 1915, 11390 ;-- CL 1929, 12720 ;-- CL 1948, 551.204 ;-- Am. 1979, Act 133, Imd. Eff. Oct. 30, 1979 ;-- Am. 2017, Act 200, Eff. Mar. 15, 2018