

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4990

To comprehensively combat child marriage in the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2024

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To comprehensively combat child marriage in the United States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Child Marriage Pre-
5 vention Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Over 300,000 minors were married in the
9 United States between 2000 and 2018. Most were
10 wed to adult men and some were as young as 10

1 years of age, though most were 16 or 17 years of
2 age.

3 (2) Child marriage limits educational opportuni-
4 ties. Women who marry before they turn 19 years
5 of age are 50 percent more likely to drop out of high
6 school and 4 times less likely to graduate from col-
7 lege.

8 (3) Girls who marry in their early teens are up
9 to 31 percent more likely to live in future poverty.

10 (4) Child marriage has harmful consequences
11 for mental and physical health. Women who married
12 as children have higher rates of certain psychiatric
13 disorders. Another study found that women who
14 marry before 19 years of age have a 23 percent
15 greater risk of developing a serious health condition,
16 including diabetes, cancer, heart attack, or stroke.

17 (5) Child marriage can facilitate physical, emo-
18 tional, and verbal abuse. Girls and young women 16
19 to 24 years of age experience the highest rates of in-
20 timate partner violence, and girls 16 to 19 years of
21 age experience intimate partner violence victimiza-
22 tion rates that are almost triple the national aver-
23 age. Further, the majority of States allow marriage
24 to be used as a defense to statutory rape laws, which

1 can incentivize perpetrators to marry victims to pre-
2 empt prosecutions.

3 (6) 70 to 80 percent of marriages entered into
4 when at least one person is under 18 years of age
5 ultimately end in divorce. According to one study
6 based on census data, 23 percent of children who
7 marry are already separated or divorced by the time
8 they turn 18 years of age.

9 (7) Depending on the State, a child facing a
10 forced marriage or a married minor trying to leave
11 may find themselves with few options. A minor try-
12 ing to avoid a forced marriage may not be able to
13 leave home without being taken into custody and re-
14 turned by police and may not be able to stay in a
15 domestic violence shelter at all or in a youth shelter
16 for longer than a few days. Friends or allies of a
17 child escaping a marriage who offer to take them in
18 could risk being charged with contributing to the de-
19 linquency of a minor or harboring a runaway. And,
20 if the minor attempts to obtain a home of their own,
21 they may find no one willing to rent to them, be-
22 cause in many circumstances, minors cannot be held
23 to contracts they enter.

24 (8) Depending on the State, a minor who is
25 being forced or coerced into marriage may not be en-

1 titled to file on their own for a protective order. Fur-
2 ther, not all States clearly treat married minors as
3 emancipated, meaning they still have the limited
4 legal status and rights of a child and face similar
5 vulnerabilities and challenges seeking help.

6 (9) Child marriage in the United States can
7 also be facilitated through the immigration system.
8 Subject to rare exceptions, United States immigra-
9 tion law recognizes marriages as valid if they were
10 legal where they took place and where the parties
11 will reside. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Serv-
12 ices reported that between fiscal year 2007 and fis-
13 cal year 2017, it approved 8,686 petitions for spous-
14 al or fiancé visas that involved at least one minor,
15 though it remains unclear how many of these visas
16 were ultimately approved by the Department of
17 State. However, approximately 2.6 percent of fiancé
18 and spousal petitions were returned unapproved to
19 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services between
20 fiscal year 2007 and fiscal year 2017. It is therefore
21 reasonable to conclude that the United States issued
22 a visa to a significant number of the spouses and
23 fiancés named on the 8,686 petitions.

24 (10) Four States set no statutory minimum age
25 for marriage. In 13 States and the District of Co-

1 lumbia, clerks acting on their own—without
2 judges—can issue marriage licenses for all minors.
3 Four States permit pregnancy to lower the minimum
4 marriage age and in one State, Mississippi, the stat-
5 ute sets different conditions for approvals for girls
6 and boys.

7 (11) There is a growing movement to eliminate
8 child marriage in the United States and 13 States—
9 Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota,
10 Rhode Island, New York, Massachusetts, Vermont,
11 Connecticut, Michigan, Washington, Virginia, and
12 New Hampshire have set the minimum age for mar-
13 riage at 18 years of age, with no exceptions. Since
14 2016, a total of 35 States have enacted new laws to
15 end or limit child marriage with 5 more States re-
16 quiring parties to be legal adults (meaning that the
17 only exception to the requirement to be 18 years of
18 age to be married is for certain court-emancipated
19 minors). Until all States take action, however, the
20 patchwork of State laws will continue to put all chil-
21 dren, particularly girls, at risk, given the ease with
22 which they can be taken out of their home State into
23 another State with lax or no laws.

24 (12) The foreign policy of the United States is
25 already imbued with these understandings that child

1 marriage is harmful and should be prevented, in-
2 cluding the following:

3 (A) The Department of State in its For-
4 eign Affairs Manual states the Federal Govern-
5 ment view of “forced marriage to be a violation
6 of basic human rights. It also considers the
7 forced marriage of a minor child to be a form
8 of child abuse, since the child will presumably
9 be subjected to non-consensual sex.”.

10 (B) The United States Agency for Inter-
11 national Development observes that Child,
12 Early, and Forced Marriage (In this paragraph
13 referred to as “CEFM”) “impedes girls’ edu-
14 cation and increases early pregnancy and the
15 risk of maternal mortality, obstetric complica-
16 tions, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS.
17 Children of young mothers have higher rates of
18 infant mortality and malnutrition compared to
19 children of mothers older than 18. . . . CEFM
20 is also associated with reductions in economic
21 productivity for individuals and nations at
22 large. CEFM is a human rights abuse and a
23 practice that undermines efforts to promote
24 sustainable growth and development.”.

1 (C) Congress enacted the Violence Against
2 Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (Public
3 Law 113–4; 127 Stat. 54), which requires the
4 Secretary of State to establish and implement a
5 multiyear strategy—

- 6 (i) to “prevent child marriages”; and
7 (ii) to “promote the empowerment of
8 girls at risk of child marriage in developing
9 countries”.

10 (13) In 2021, the National Strategy on Gender
11 Equity and Equality named child marriage as a
12 form of gender-based violence that undermines
13 human rights globally and domestically, noting—

14 (A) “Millions of women and girls remain at
15 risk of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/
16 C) and child, early and forced marriage, forms
17 of gender-based violence that undermine secu-
18 rity and human rights, including here in the
19 United States”; and

20 (B) “In the United States, we will collabo-
21 rate with state officials to prevent and address
22 harmful practices that undermine human
23 rights, including laws that permit child, early
24 and forced marriage . . . and ensure access to
25 social services for those harmed.”.

1 (1) conduct a comprehensive study on child
2 marriage in the United States, including—

3 (A) applicable laws, or the absence of laws,
4 which define or prohibit child marriage;

5 (B) the extent to which such marriages
6 currently occur;

7 (C) the extent to which such marriages oc-
8 curred over the last 5 years in each State;

9 (D) the circumstances in which such mar-
10 riages take place (including risk factors that
11 may have played a role in such marriages tak-
12 ing place); and

13 (E) the impact of such marriages on the
14 individuals who were married before turning 18
15 years of age;

16 (2) build upon the evaluations of other entities
17 and avoid unnecessary duplication, by reviewing the
18 findings, conclusions, and recommendations of other
19 commissions, the Federal Government, State and
20 local governments, State task forces, and nongovern-
21 mental entities relating to child marriage in the
22 United States;

23 (3) submit a report on specific findings, conclu-
24 sions, and recommendations to eliminate child mar-
25 riage in the United States to—

1 (A) the Committee on the Judiciary and
2 the Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
3 and Pensions of the Senate;

4 (B) the Committee on the Judiciary and
5 the Committee on Education and the Workforce
6 of the House of Representatives; and

7 (C) the Secretary of Health and Human
8 Services; and

9 (4) carry out other duties as described in sub-
10 section (c).

11 (b) COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION.—

12 (1) MEMBERS.—The Commission shall be com-
13 posed of 10 members, of whom—

14 (A) 1 member shall be appointed by the
15 President;

16 (B) 1 member, who is of a different polit-
17 ical party than that of the member appointed
18 under paragraph (1), shall be appointed by the
19 President;

20 (C) 4 members shall be appointed by the
21 Secretary of Health and Human Services;

22 (D) 1 member shall be appointed by the
23 majority leader of the Senate;

24 (E) 1 member shall be appointed by the
25 minority leader of the Senate;

1 (F) 1 member shall be appointed by the
2 Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

3 (G) 1 member shall be appointed by the
4 minority leader of the House of Representa-
5 tives.

6 (2) GOVERNMENTAL APPOINTEES.—An indi-
7 vidual appointed to the Commission may not be an
8 officer or employee of the Federal Government.

9 (3) COMMISSION REPRESENTATION.—The Com-
10 mission shall include at least—

11 (A) 1 survivor of child marriage;

12 (B) 1 representative from a private non-
13 profit entity with demonstrated expertise in
14 working with survivors of child marriage in the
15 United States;

16 (C) 1 representative from a private non-
17 profit entity with demonstrated expertise in
18 working with immigrant survivors of child mar-
19 riage in the United States; and

20 (D) 1 representative from a private non-
21 profit entity with demonstrated expertise in
22 working with State governments to limit child
23 marriage.

1 (4) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members appointed
2 under paragraph (1) shall have demonstrated experi-
3 ence or expertise in—

4 (A) providing services to survivors of child
5 marriage in the United States;

6 (B) providing services to immigrant sur-
7 vivors of child marriage in the United States;

8 (C) working with State governments to
9 limit child marriage;

10 (D) the medical challenges that survivors
11 of child marriage face;

12 (E) the mental health challenges that sur-
13 vivors of child marriage face;

14 (F) legal issues involving individuals who
15 were married or sought to marry before becom-
16 ing 18 years of age;

17 (G) conducting research on the impact of
18 child marriage on individuals who were married
19 before becoming 18 years of age;

20 (H) risk factors that play a role in child
21 marriage; or

22 (I) issues of forced or coerced marriage,
23 family violence, sexual assault, human traf-
24 ficking, or child abuse.

1 (5) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 120
2 days after the appointment of members of the Com-
3 mission, the Commission shall—

4 (A) hold an initial meeting, at which the
5 members shall elect a Chairperson and Vice
6 Chairperson, who shall be of different political
7 parties, from among such members and shall
8 determine a schedule of Commission meetings;
9 and

10 (B) begin the operations of the Commis-
11 sion.

12 (6) QUORUM AND VACANCY.—

13 (A) QUORUM.—A majority of the members
14 of the Commission shall constitute a quorum,
15 but a lesser number of members may hold hear-
16 ings.

17 (B) VACANCY.—Any vacancy in the Com-
18 mission shall not affect its powers and shall be
19 filled in the same manner in which the original
20 appointment was made.

21 (c) DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.—The Commission
22 shall—

23 (1) conduct pursuant to subsection (a) a com-
24 prehensive study that examines and assesses the
25 adequacy of laws addressing child marriage, the ex-

1 tent of child marriage across the country, risk fac-
2 tors that play a role in child marriage, and the im-
3 pact of child marriage on those individuals in the
4 United States who marry before becoming 18 years
5 of age, including making specific findings relating
6 to—

7 (A) threats to such individuals' safety and
8 well-being, including—

9 (i) physical and mental health, eco-
10 nomic, and educational impacts;

11 (ii) forced or coerced marriage;

12 (iii) family violence;

13 (iv) vulnerability to abuse and exploi-
14 tation;

15 (v) sexual assault;

16 (vi) child abuse and neglect; and

17 (vii) human trafficking;

18 (B) barriers to and gaps in services for mi-
19 nors facing the threat of forced marriage or al-
20 ready married minors seeking protection from
21 abuse;

22 (C) Federal laws, regulations, policies, and
23 programs relevant to child marriage and indi-
24 viduals who marry before becoming 18 years of
25 age; and

1 (D) based on a survey of such laws, State
2 laws defining or prohibiting child marriage, in-
3 cluding lessons learned from States that have,
4 or that lack, laws, regulations, and policies to
5 limit child marriage; and

6 (2) submit to the President, the Secretary of
7 Health and Human Services, and Congress a report
8 on the specific findings, conclusions, and rec-
9 ommendations to address and ultimately eliminate
10 child marriage in the United States and improve
11 services and outcomes for survivors of child marriage
12 in the United States, including specific recommenda-
13 tions on policies, regulations, and legislative changes
14 as the Commission considers appropriate to address
15 child marriage in the United States.

16 (d) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.—

17 (1) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold
18 such hearings, meet and act at such times and
19 places, and receive such evidence as may be nec-
20 essary to carry out the functions of the Commission.

21 (2) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may
23 access, to the extent authorized by law, from
24 any executive department, bureau, agency,
25 board, commission, office, independent estab-

1 lishment, or instrumentality of the Federal Gov-
2 ernment such information, suggestions, esti-
3 mates, and statistics as the Commission con-
4 siders necessary to carry out this section.

5 (B) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—On
6 written request of the Chairperson of the Com-
7 mission, each department, bureau, agency,
8 board, commission, office, independent estab-
9 lishment, or instrumentality shall, to the extent
10 authorized by law, provide the requested infor-
11 mation to the Commission.

12 (C) RECEIPT, HANDLING, STORAGE, AND
13 DISSEMINATION.—Information shall only be re-
14 ceived, handled, stored, and disseminated by
15 members of the Commission and its staff con-
16 sistent with all applicable statutes, regulations,
17 and Executive orders.

18 (3) LISTENING SESSIONS.—The Commission
19 shall organize and facilitate listening sessions with
20 survivors of, advocates on issues relating to, and ex-
21 perts on child marriage in order to discharge its du-
22 ties under this section.

23 (4) DONATIONS.—The Commission may accept,
24 use, and dispose of donations of services or property.

1 (5) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may
2 use the United States mails in the same manner and
3 under the same conditions as a department or agen-
4 cy of the United States.

5 (e) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Com-
6 mission shall serve without compensation, but shall receive
7 travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence,
8 in accordance with applicable provisions in the same man-
9 ner as persons employed intermittently in the Government
10 service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title
11 5, United States Code.

12 (f) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT APPLICA-
13 BILITY.—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code, shall
14 apply to the Commission, including the staff of the Com-
15 mission.

16 (g) REPORTS OF COMMISSION AND TERMINATION.—

17 (1) INTERIM REPORT.—The Commission shall,
18 not later than 1 year after the date of the initial
19 meeting of the Commission, submit to the President
20 and Congress an interim report containing specific
21 findings, conclusions, and recommendations required
22 under this section as have been agreed to by a ma-
23 jority of Commission members.

24 (2) OTHER REPORTS AND INFORMATION.—

1 (A) REPORTS.—The Commission may
2 issue additional reports as the Commission de-
3 termines necessary.

4 (B) INFORMATION.—The Commission may
5 hold public hearings to collect information and
6 shall make such information available for use
7 by the public.

8 (3) FINAL REPORT.—The Commission shall,
9 not later than 2 years after the date of the initial
10 meeting of the Commission, submit a final report
11 containing specific findings, conclusions, and rec-
12 ommendations required under this section as have
13 been agreed to by a majority of Commission mem-
14 bers to—

15 (A) the President;

16 (B) the Secretary of Health and Human
17 Services;

18 (C) the Committee on the Judiciary and
19 the Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
20 and Pensions of the Senate; and

21 (D) the Committee on the Judiciary and
22 the Committee on Education and the Workforce
23 of the House of Representatives.

24 (4) TERMINATION.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission, and
2 all the authorities of this section, shall termi-
3 nate 180 days after the date on which the final
4 report is submitted under paragraph (3).

5 (B) RECORDS.—Not later than the date of
6 termination of the Commission under subpara-
7 graph (A), all records and papers of the Com-
8 mission shall be delivered to the Archivist of the
9 United States for deposit in the National Ar-
10 chives.

11 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
12 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
13 \$1,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2027 and 2028.

14 **SEC. 5. GAO REPORTS.**

15 (a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “appro-
16 priate committees of Congress” means the Committee on
17 the Judiciary and the Committee on Health, Education,
18 and Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee
19 on the Judiciary and the Committee on Education and the
20 Workforce of the House of Representatives.

21 (b) CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE UNITED STATES.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after
23 the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller
24 General of the United States shall submit to the ap-

1 appropriate committees of Congress a report describ-
2 ing—

3 (A) Federal laws, regulations, policies, and
4 programs relevant to child marriage and indi-
5 viduals who marry before becoming 18 years of
6 age;

7 (B) applicable laws, or the absence of laws,
8 which define or prohibit child marriage;

9 (C) the extent to which such marriages oc-
10 curred during the 5-year period ending on the
11 date of enactment of this Act in each State;
12 and

13 (D) research and studies published during
14 the 10-year period ending on the date of enact-
15 ment of this Act assessing—

16 (i) the common or typical cir-
17 cumstances in which such marriages take
18 place, including information indicating the
19 prevalence of forced or coerced marriage
20 and risk factors that may have played a
21 role in such marriages taking place; and

22 (ii) the impact of such marriages on
23 the individuals who were married before
24 turning 18 years of age in the United
25 States, including the impact on the safety

1 and well-being of such individuals, includ-
 2 ing—

3 (I) medical and mental health;

4 (II) economic and educational
 5 outcomes;

6 (III) risk of or vulnerability to—

7 (aa) family violence;

8 (bb) abuse or exploitation;

9 (cc) sexual assault;

10 (dd) child abuse or neglect;

11 or

12 (ee) human trafficking; and

13 (IV) barriers to and gaps in serv-
 14 ices for minors facing the threat of
 15 forced marriage or already married
 16 minors seeking protection from abuse.

17 (2) ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING INFORMA-
 18 TION.—The Comptroller General of the United
 19 States may request that States provide the informa-
 20 tion necessary to address the portion of the report
 21 required under paragraph (1)(C).

22 (c) CHILD MARRIAGE AND IMMIGRATION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
 24 the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years
 25 thereafter through 2030, the Comptroller General of

1 the United States shall submit to the appropriate
2 committees of Congress a report that assesses the
3 extent to which—

4 (A) noncitizens who were under 18 years
5 of age on the date of marriage are admitted to
6 the United States as beneficiaries of approved
7 petitions submitted by the United States citizen
8 or lawful permanent resident spouses of the
9 noncitizens; and

10 (B) the United States has admitted non-
11 immigrant spouses who, on the date on which
12 a nonimmigrant visa petition was submitted for
13 the principal noncitizens, were under 18 years
14 of age.

15 (2) ELEMENTS.—Each report required under
16 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

17 (A) For each petition described in para-
18 graph (1)(A) approved during the 2-year period
19 preceding the report—

20 (i) the gender of the beneficiary and
21 petitioner;

22 (ii) the ages of the beneficiary and pe-
23 titioner on—

24 (I) the date of the marriage;

1 (II) the date on which the peti-
2 tion was submitted; and

3 (III) the date on which the peti-
4 tion was approved; and

5 (iii) in the case of a noncitizen who
6 was under 18 years of age on the date on
7 which such a petition was submitted, a de-
8 scription of the basis upon which the evi-
9 dentiary requirements were determined to
10 have been met under, as applicable—

11 (I) clause (ii) of section
12 101(a)(15)(K) of the Immigration and
13 Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
14 1101(a)(15)(K)), as amended by sec-
15 tion 8 of this Act;

16 (II) clause (iii)(II) of section
17 201(b)(2)(A) of that Act (8 U.S.C.
18 1151(b)(2)(A)), as amended by sec-
19 tion 8 of this Act; or

20 (III) subparagraph (A)(ii) of sec-
21 tion 203(a)(2) of that Act (8 U.S.C.
22 1153(a)(2)), as amended by section 8
23 of this Act.

24 (B) A summary of feedback from adjudica-
25 tors of such petitions with respect to whether

1 the evidentiary requirements under the provi-
2 sions described in subclauses (I) through (III)
3 of subparagraph (A)(ii) provide sufficient guid-
4 ance, and the manner in which such guidance
5 may be improved.

6 (C) Specific conclusions and recommenda-
7 tions with respect to whether a minimum age
8 on the date of marriage should be required for
9 beneficiaries of petitions submitted by their
10 United States citizen or lawful permanent resi-
11 dent spouses.

12 **SEC. 6. GRANT PROGRAM FOR STATE TASK FORCES TO EX-**
13 **AMINE CHILD MARRIAGE.**

14 The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42
15 U.S.C. 10401 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
16 the following:

17 **“SEC. 315. STATE TASK FORCES TO EXAMINE CHILD MAR-**
18 **RIAGE.**

19 “(a) IN GENERAL.—

20 “(1) PROGRAM.—From amounts made available
21 under subsection (c), the Secretary may award
22 grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible States to
23 establish a State-based task force to examine child
24 marriage in the eligible State.

1 “(2) ELIGIBLE STATE.—In this section, the
2 term ‘eligible State’ means a State that permits an
3 individual younger than 18 years of age to marry.

4 “(3) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a
5 grant under paragraph (1), an eligible State shall
6 submit to the Secretary an application at such time,
7 in such manner, and containing such information as
8 the Secretary may require.

9 “(b) STATE TASK FORCE.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible State awarded a
11 grant under subsection (a)(1) shall establish a task
12 force to examine child marriage in the eligible State.

13 “(2) APPOINTEES.—A task force established
14 under paragraph (1) shall include individuals with—

15 “(A) advocacy expertise in combating fam-
16 ily violence, sexual assault, human trafficking,
17 or child abuse or neglect issues;

18 “(B) experience in social work or school
19 counseling, with preference for such individuals
20 with experience providing culturally specific
21 services;

22 “(C) experience in providing legal assist-
23 ance to survivors of family violence, sexual as-
24 sault, or human trafficking, with a preference
25 for such individuals with experience serving

1 such survivors who are younger than 18 years
2 of age;

3 “(D) experience in providing legal assist-
4 ance to individuals with needs for child protec-
5 tion services, including foster youth, homeless
6 and runaway youth, and youth otherwise at-risk
7 for needing such services;

8 “(E) judicial experience with cases involv-
9 ing child protection and family violence issues;

10 “(F) legal experience with cases involving
11 emancipation, guardianship, or child-specific
12 protection orders, with special preference for
13 such individuals who have worked on cases in-
14 volving forced or coerced marriage; or

15 “(G) professional medical or mental health
16 experience.

17 “(3) TASKS.—A task force established under
18 paragraph (1) shall—

19 “(A) collect Statewide statistics for each of
20 the 10 years preceding the date of the grant
21 award on the number, age, gender, and resi-
22 dency of individuals in the eligible State who
23 were younger than 18 years of age at the time
24 of the marriage of such individual;

1 “(B) examine the risk factors that lead to
2 child marriage and negative impacts from child
3 marriage in the eligible State, including the re-
4 lationship between child marriage and threats
5 to a minor’s safety, health, and well-being, and
6 including risk factors and impacts such as
7 forced or coerced marriage, family violence, sex-
8 ual assault, child abuse and neglect, human
9 trafficking, educational impacts, poverty, and
10 other negative impacts on individuals who are
11 younger than 18 years of age who marry;

12 “(C) examine whether marriages that in-
13 clude an individual younger than 18 years of
14 age should be prohibited in the eligible State;

15 “(D) develop policy recommendations for
16 the eligible State to address negative impacts of
17 child marriage on individuals and the intersec-
18 tion between child marriage and forced or co-
19 erced marriage, family violence, sexual assault,
20 child abuse and neglect, and human trafficking;
21 and

22 “(E) prepare a report with the rec-
23 ommendations of the task force, including on
24 protecting individuals who are younger than 18
25 years of age from the negative impacts of child

1 marriage and forced or coerced marriages and
2 enabling already-married individuals who are
3 younger than 18 years of age to protect them-
4 selves from abuse.

5 “(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
7 \$375,000 for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2032.”.

8 **SEC. 7. STATE INCENTIVES TO ELIMINATE CHILD MAR-**
9 **RIAGE.**

10 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the term “covered
11 formula grant” means a grant under—

12 (1) part T of title I of the Omnibus Crime Con-
13 trol and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10441
14 et seq.) (commonly referred to as the “STOP Vio-
15 lence Against Women Formula Grant Program”); or

16 (2) section 41601 of the Violence Against
17 Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12511) (commonly
18 referred to as the “Sexual Assault Services Pro-
19 gram”).

20 (b) INCREASED FUNDING FOR FORMULA GRANTS
21 AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General shall increase the
22 amount provided to a State under the covered formula
23 grants in accordance with this section if the State has in
24 place a law that prohibits marriage for individuals who

1 have not attained 18 years of age or, if more than 18 years
2 of age, the age of majority for the State.

3 (c) APPLICATION.—A State seeking an increase in
4 the amount provided to the State under the covered for-
5 mula grants shall include in the application of the State
6 for each covered formula grant such information as the
7 Attorney General may reasonably require, including infor-
8 mation about the law described in subsection (b).

9 (d) GRANT INCREASE.—The amount of the increase
10 provided to a State under the covered formula grants
11 under this section shall be equal to not more than 10 per-
12 cent of the average of the total amount of funding pro-
13 vided to the State under the covered formula grants under
14 the 3 most recent awards to the State.

15 (e) PERIOD OF INCREASE.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall
17 provide an increase in the amount provided to a
18 State under the covered formula grants under this
19 section for a 2-year period.

20 (2) LIMIT.—The Attorney General may not
21 provide an increase in the amount provided to a
22 State under the covered formula grants under this
23 section more than 4 times.

24 (f) ALLOCATION OF INCREASED FORMULA GRANT
25 FUNDS.—The Attorney General shall allocate an increase

1 in the amount provided to a State under the covered for-
2 mula grants under this section such that—

3 (1) 25 percent the amount of the increase is
4 provided under the program described in subsection
5 (a)(1); and

6 (2) 75 percent the amount of the increase is
7 provided under the program described in subsection
8 (a)(2).

9 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—If the
10 National Commission to Combat Child Marriage in the
11 United States submits the interim report required under
12 section 4(g)(1), there is authorized to be appropriated to
13 carry out this section \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years
14 2027 through 2032.

15 **SEC. 8. FEDERAL LIMITATIONS ON CHILD MARRIAGE.**

16 No property that is on any land or in any building
17 owned by, leased to, or otherwise used by or under the
18 control of the Federal Government may be used to facili-
19 tate a marriage unless both of the individuals marrying
20 are at least 18 years of age at the time of the marriage.

21 **SEC. 9. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS**
22 **CHILD MARRIAGE.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall estab-
24 lish a working group which shall, not later than 180 days
25 after the date on which the National Commission to Com-

1 bat Child Marriage in the United States issues the final
2 report required under section 4(g)(3), promulgate a model
3 State statute that prohibits child marriage by requiring
4 a person to be at least 18 years of age or, for a State
5 with an age of majority that is older than 18 years of
6 age, the age of majority in the State, at the time of mar-
7 riage.

8 (b) COMPOSITION OF THE WORKING GROUP.—The
9 working group established under subsection (a) shall be
10 composed of 8 members, of whom at least 1 member shall
11 be from the following components of the Department of
12 Justice:

13 (1) The Office of Legal Policy.

14 (2) The Office of Legislative Affairs.

15 (3) The Child Exploitation and Obscenity Sec-
16 tion of the Criminal Division.

17 (4) The Human Rights and Special Prosecu-
18 tions Section of the Criminal Division.

19 (5) The Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit
20 of the Civil Rights Division.

21 (6) The Office of Violence Against Women.

22 **SEC. 10. MODIFICATIONS TO IMMIGRATION PROVISIONS**
23 **RELATING TO MARRIAGE.**

24 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise specifi-
2 cally provided, any term used in this section that is
3 used in the immigration laws shall have the meaning
4 given the term in the immigration laws.

5 (2) IMMIGRATION LAWS.—The term “immigra-
6 tion laws” has the meaning given the term in section
7 101(a)(17) of the Immigration and Nationality Act
8 (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(17)).

9 (b) MODIFICATIONS TO IMMIGRATION PROVISIONS
10 RELATING TO MARRIAGE.—

11 (1) DEFINITION OF NONCITIZEN.—Section
12 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8
13 U.S.C. 1101(a)) is amended by adding at the end
14 the following:

15 “(53) The term ‘noncitizen’ means any person who
16 is not a citizen or national of the United States.”.

17 (2) CLASSIFICATIONS RELATING TO VISAS FOR
18 NONCITIZEN FIANCÉS AND SPOUSES.—

19 (A) K VISAS.—Section 101(a)(15)(K) of
20 the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
21 1101(a)(15)(K)) is amended to read as follows:

22 “(K) subject to subsections (d) and (r) of sec-
23 tion 214, a noncitizen—

24 “(i)(I) who is the fiancée or fiancé of a cit-
25 izen of the United States (other than a citizen

1 described in section 204(a)(1)(A)(viii)(I) who
2 is at least 18 years of age; and

3 “(II) who—

4 “(aa) seeks to enter the United States
5 solely to conclude a valid marriage with the
6 petitioner within ninety days after admis-
7 sion; and

8 “(bb) is at least 18 years of age;

9 “(ii)(I) who has concluded a valid marriage
10 with a citizen of the United States who is the
11 petitioner who is at least 18 years of age and
12 was at least 18 years of age on the date of the
13 marriage (other than a citizen described in sec-
14 tion 204(a)(1)(A)(viii)(I)); and

15 “(II) who—

16 “(aa) is the beneficiary of a petition
17 to accord a status under section
18 201(b)(2)(A)(i) that was filed under sec-
19 tion 204 by the petitioner;

20 “(bb) seeks to enter the United States
21 to await the approval of such petition and
22 the availability to the noncitizen of an im-
23 migrant visa; and

24 “(cc) is at least 18 years of age, or is
25 at least 16 years of age and is granted a

1 waiver of such age requirement based on a
2 compelling humanitarian reason for the
3 issuance of a visa, arising from a risk of
4 individualized and targeted harm to such
5 noncitizen, and which shall not include pa-
6 rental consent, a child in common with the
7 petitioner, pregnancy, or any combination
8 thereof; or

9 “(iii) who is the minor child of a noncitizen
10 described in clause (i) or (ii) and is accom-
11 panying, or following to join, the noncitizen.”.

12 (B) IMMEDIATE RELATIVES.—Section
13 201(b)(2)(A) of the Immigration and Nation-
14 ality Act (8 U.S.C. 1151(b)(2)(A)) is amended
15 by adding at the end the following:

16 “(iii) For purposes of this subparagraph, a non-
17 citizen spouse may only be considered the immediate
18 relative of a United States citizen spouse if—

19 “(I) the United States citizen spouse is at
20 least 18 years of age and was at least 18 years
21 of age at the time of marriage; and

22 “(II) the noncitizen spouse is—

23 “(aa) at least 18 years of age; or

24 “(bb) at least 16 years of age and has
25 been granted a waiver of the age require-

1 ment under item (aa) based on a compel-
2 ling humanitarian reason for the issuance
3 of a visa, arising from a risk of individual-
4 ized and targeted harm to the noncitizen
5 seeking a visa, and which shall not include
6 parental consent, a child in common with
7 the petitioner, pregnancy, or any combina-
8 tion thereof.”.

9 (C) SPOUSES OF LAWFUL PERMANENT
10 RESIDENTS.—Section 203(a)(2) of the Immi-
11 gration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
12 1153(a)(2)) is amended by striking subpara-
13 graphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

14 “(A) who—

15 “(i) are the spouses of noncitizens
16 lawfully admitted for permanent residence
17 aged 18 years or older and who were at
18 least 18 years of age at the time of mar-
19 riage; and

20 “(ii)(I) are at least 18 years of age; or

21 “(II) are at least 16 years of age and
22 have been granted a waiver of the age re-
23 quirement under subclause (I) based on a
24 compelling humanitarian reason for the
25 issuance of a visa, arising from a risk of

1 individualized and targeted harm to the
2 noncitizen seeking a visa, and which shall
3 not include parental consent, a child in
4 common with the petitioner, pregnancy, or
5 any combination thereof;

6 “(B) who are the children of noncitizens
7 lawfully admitted for permanent residence; or

8 “(C) who are the unmarried sons or un-
9 married daughters (but are not the children) of
10 noncitizens lawfully admitted for permanent
11 residence.”.

12 (3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The amend-
13 ments made by this subsection may not be construed
14 to preclude, limit, or modify eligibility of any noncit-
15 izen spouse subjected to battery or extreme cruelty
16 and otherwise eligible for relief as a VAWA self-peti-
17 tioner (as defined in section 101(a)(51) of the Immig-
18 ration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
19 1101(a)(51))), or any battered spouse (within the
20 meaning of section 240A(b)(2) of that Act (8 U.S.C.
21 1229b(b)(2))), for any available relief under the im-
22 migrations laws without regard to either spouse’s
23 age at time of marriage.

24 (4) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made
25 by this subsection shall only apply to petitions or ap-

1 plications for any status or benefit under the immi-
2 gration laws that are filed or otherwise submitted on
3 or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

4 (c) PROXY MARRIAGE.—Section 101(a)(35) of the
5 Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(35))
6 is amended by striking “marriage shall have been con-
7 summated” and inserting “parties have met in person dur-
8 ing the 2-year period immediately preceding the date of
9 the ceremony”.

10 (d) PUBLIC EDUCATION ON CHANGES TO IMMIGRA-
11 TION LAW.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date of the
13 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland
14 Security and the Secretary of State, in coordination
15 with the head of any other appropriate Federal
16 agency, shall immediately, and on an ongoing basis,
17 provide educational materials and information to the
18 public, in multiple languages, on the amendments
19 made by this section and the changes to immigration
20 law made by such amendments.

21 (2) ELEMENTS.—At a minimum, the edu-
22 cational materials and information provided under
23 paragraph (1) shall be—

1 (A) made available in multiple languages
2 on the internet website of U.S. Citizenship and
3 Immigration Services, including—

4 (i) on the U.S. Citizenship and Immi-
5 gration Services homepage; and

6 (ii) at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/forced-marriage>;

8 (B) on view in public areas of the offices
9 of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in
10 English and the 1 or more primary languages
11 of the country in which the office is located, as
12 applicable;

13 (C) presented through U.S. Citizenship
14 and Immigration Services community forums
15 with immigrant communities in the United
16 States;

17 (D) provided to all registered immigration
18 legal services providers in the United States for
19 distribution to the community;

20 (E) made available on all relevant pages of
21 the internet website of the Department of
22 State;

23 (F) on view at United States embassies
24 and consulates, in English and the 1 or more

1 primary languages of the applicable country;
2 and

3 (G) incorporated into video advisories on
4 immigration requirements shown at United
5 States embassies, consulates, and ports of
6 entry.

7 (e) PROMOTION OF INFORMATION ON CHILD MAR-
8 RIAGE.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date of the
10 enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland
11 Security, the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
12 ices, and the Attorney General, in coordination with
13 the head of any other appropriate Federal agency,
14 shall immediately, and on an ongoing basis, promote
15 information on—

16 (A) the harmful impacts of child marriage
17 described in section 2; and

18 (B) the governmental and nongovern-
19 mental resources an individual may contact to
20 receive support services relating to such im-
21 pacts.

22 (2) ELEMENTS.—At a minimum, the informa-
23 tion provided under paragraph (1) shall be—

1 (A) made available in multiple languages
2 on the internet website of U.S. Citizenship and
3 Immigration Services;

4 (B) presented through U.S. Citizenship
5 and Immigration Services community forums
6 with immigrant communities in the United
7 States;

8 (C) incorporated into video advisories on
9 immigration requirements shown at United
10 States embassies, consulates, and ports of
11 entry;

12 (D) provided to all registered immigration
13 legal services providers and refugee resettlement
14 agencies in the United States or distribution to
15 the community; and

16 (E) made available on all relevant pages of
17 the internet website of the Department of
18 State.

19 (f) UPDATES TO IMMIGRATION FORMS.—The in-
20 structions for Form I-130 (Petition for Alien Relatives)
21 and Form I-129F (Petition for Alien Fiance(e)) shall be
22 updated to reflect the amendments made by this section
23 and the modifications to the immigration laws made by
24 such amendments.

25 (g) PUBLIC EDUCATION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date of the
2 enactment of this Act, the Federal Government shall
3 immediately, and on an ongoing basis, provide edu-
4 cational materials and information to the public, in
5 multiple languages, on the amendments made by
6 this section and the changes to immigration law
7 made by such amendments.

8 (2) ELEMENTS.—At a minimum, the edu-
9 cational materials and information provided under
10 paragraph (1) shall be—

11 (A) made available on the internet website
12 of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services,
13 including—

14 (i) on the U.S. Citizenship and Immi-
15 gration Services homepage; and

16 (ii) at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/forced-marriage>;

17 (B) on view in publicly accessible areas of
18 the offices of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration
19 Services;
20

21 (C) presented through U.S. Citizenship
22 and Immigration Services community forums
23 with immigrant communities in the United
24 States;

1 (D) provided to all registered immigration
2 legal services providers in the United States for
3 distribution to the community;

4 (E) made available on the internet website
5 of the Department of State, including at—

6 (i) <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>;

7
8 (ii) <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas.html>; and

9
10 (iii) <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/forced-marriage.html>;

11
12
13 (F) on view at United States embassies
14 and consulates, in English and the 1 or more
15 primary languages of the applicable country;

16 (G) incorporated into video advisories on
17 immigration requirements shown at United
18 States embassies, consulates, and ports of
19 entry; and

20 (H) included in the advisory pamphlet re-
21 quired under section 833 of the International
22 Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2005 (Pub-
23 lic Law 109–162; 119 Stat. 3068) entitled “In-
24 formation on the Legal Rights Available to Im-
25 migrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the

1 United States and Facts about Immigrating on
2 a Marriage-Based Visa”, which is distributed
3 directly to applicants for family-based immigra-
4 tion petitions at all consular and adjustment
5 interviews for marriage-based visas.

6 (h) DISTRIBUTION OF DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND
7 SECURITY GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PAMPHLET (GBV
8 PAMPHLET).—The gender-based violence pamphlet devel-
9 oped by the Department of Homeland Security as part of
10 the Blue Campaign (referred to in this subsection as the
11 “GBV pamphlet”) shall be made available and distributed
12 as follows:

13 (1) INCLUSION IN IMMIGRATION FORMS.—The
14 instructions for Form I–130 (Petition for Alien Rel-
15 atives) and Form I–129F (Petition for Alien
16 Fiancé(e)) shall include—

17 (A) the GBV pamphlet in its entirety, in
18 English, under the following section heading:
19 “The pamphlet below describes what gender-
20 based violence (GBV) is, who is affected by
21 GBV, and how and where to seek help if you
22 or someone you know is experiencing any form
23 of GBV. These materials are also available in
24 Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Traditional), French,

1 Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish,
2 and Urdu.”; and

3 (B) within the section heading preceding
4 the GBV pamphlet described in subparagraph
5 (A), a link to the Blue Campaign GBV pam-
6 phlet landing page, [https://www.dhs.gov/blue-](https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/publication/gender-based-pamphlets-and-flyers)
7 [campaign/publication/gender-based-pamphlets-](https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/publication/gender-based-pamphlets-and-flyers)
8 [and-flyers](https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/publication/gender-based-pamphlets-and-flyers).

9 (2) MAILING TO PETITIONER AND BENE-
10 FICIARY.—

11 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Director of U.S.
12 Citizenship and Immigration Services shall mail
13 the GBV pamphlet to each petitioner and bene-
14 ficiary of a K nonimmigrant visa pursuant to
15 section 101(a)(15)(K) (8 U.S.C.
16 1101(a)(15)(K)) upon receipt of an application
17 for such a visa.

18 (B) LANGUAGE.—Each GBV pamphlet
19 mailed under subparagraph (A) shall be the
20 version in the primary language of the peti-
21 tioner and the primary language of the bene-
22 ficiary, or in English if a translation into such
23 language is unavailable.

1 (3) POSTING ON NATIONAL VISA CENTER
2 WEBSITE.—The Secretary of State shall post the
3 GBV pamphlet on the internet website of—

4 (A) the National Visa Center; and

5 (B) each consular post that processes K
6 nonimmigrant visa applications.

7 (4) CONSULAR INTERVIEWS.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State
9 shall ensure that the GBV pamphlet is distrib-
10 uted directly to K nonimmigrant visa applicants
11 at all consular interviews for such visas.

12 (B) LANGUAGE.—If a written translation
13 of the GBV pamphlet is unavailable in an appli-
14 cant’s primary language, the consular officer
15 conducting the visa interview shall—

16 (i) review the contents of pamphlet
17 with the applicant orally in the applicant’s
18 primary language; and

19 (ii) distribute the pamphlet to the ap-
20 plicant in English.

21 (5) DISPLAY AND AVAILABILITY AT EMBASSIES
22 AND CONSULATES.—The Secretary of State shall en-
23 sure that the GBV pamphlet—

24 (A) is displayed at each United States em-
25 bassy and consulate; and

1 (B) made available in English and, if avail-
2 able, the primary language of the location of
3 the embassy or consulate.

4 (6) DISPLAY AND AVAILABILITY AT U.S. CITI-
5 ZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES OFFICES.—
6 The Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure
7 that the GBV pamphlet is displayed and made avail-
8 able in English at each U.S. Citizenship and Immi-
9 gration Services office at which applicant interviews
10 for K nonimmigrant visas are conducted.

○