



## End Child Marriage in California

**It is time to restrict marriage under the age of 18 protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in our state.**

### FACTS:

- California is the **6th highest state in the nation for reported per capita marriages of 15-17 year olds**, at 5.5 children per thousand.\*
- There is **no minimum age for marriage** in California as long as one parent or guardian and a judge sign off on the union.
- The harm to a married child is so great that the **United States' State Department considers marriage before age 18 to be a "human rights abuse."**
- Child marriage laws circumvent statutory rape laws and disregard the meaning of consent.
- Child marriages occur disproportionately between girls and adult men. \*\*
- **Child marriage affects girls' educational and economic opportunities.** Girls who marry early are 50 percent more likely to drop out of high school and four times less likely to receive a college education. They are also more likely to live in poverty. \*\*\*
- **Child marriage affects girls' health and safety.** Girls who married before the age of 18 have a 23 percent greater risk of disease onset, as well as higher rates of unwanted pregnancies, deaths in childbirth, sexually transmitted infections, and mental illness. They are more likely to be victims of domestic violence. \*\*\*
- Texas has just passed a law making 18 the minimum age for marriage or 16 in the case of emancipation in their state yet, California **still** lacks a minimum age for marriage.
- Virginia was the first state to **completely ban** child marriage—setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 or if a 16-17 year old has been emancipated.

**If Texas and Virginia are passing legislation to protect children in their states, it is time for California to follow suit! Call your State Senators and Assembly Members today and urge them to end child marriage in California.**

\*Pew Research Center

[http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/01/child-marriage-is-rare-in-the-u-s-though-this-varies-by-state/ft\\_16-10-14\\_childmarriageus/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/01/child-marriage-is-rare-in-the-u-s-though-this-varies-by-state/ft_16-10-14_childmarriageus/)

\*\*Tahirih Justice Center <http://www.tahirih.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Tahirih-Child-Marriage-Backgrounder.pdf>

\*\*\* Professor Gordon B Dahl <http://econweb.ucsd.edu/~gdahl/papers/early-teen-marriage.pdf>