

Congresswoman Gwen Moore and Congressman Van Taylor introduce  
**The Status of Child Marriages in the United States Act**

Endorsements: Forced Marriage Working Group (FMWG) including: Tahirih Justice Center (Chair), National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (NRCDDV), Apna Ghar, Arab American Family Services, Daya Inc., Muslims for Progressive Values Peaceful Families Project, Sakhi for South Asian Women, There Is No Limit Foundation

**Background:**

Since 2000, over 200,000 minors have married in the United States, many of them girls married to adult men. Many child marriages are forced, and marriage can often be used to cover up sexual violence and abuse against children.

In 2016, Virginia became the first state to end child marriage by requiring marriage licenses to be issued to legal adults (individuals 18 and older), with an exception only for emancipated minors. Since then, 24 more states have passed reforms to end or limit child marriage. Finally, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Minnesota became the first states to ban all marriage under 18, without exception.

While many of these reforms are remarkable, we still have huge gaps in information on that status of underaged marriages. We believe we need the following information in order to address this issue at a national level to ensure that children are not being forced into marriage.

**The Status of Child Marriages in the United States Act** asks the Secretary of Health and Human Services for the following:

- The prevalence of child marriages that have received exceptions through parental consent, judicial approval, emancipation, or pregnancy
- The prevalence of child marriages that take place under force, fraud, or coercion and a study of provisions that states have enacted to help identify and prevent the marriage of minors due to force, fraud, or coercion
- The extent in which these marriages make individuals vulnerable to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or trafficking
- The impact of state-wide legislative reforms on the number of marriage licenses given to minors
- The impact of state reforms on neighboring states in order to see if minors are being taken across state borders in order to receive marriage licenses in states that have weaker child marriage laws