

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8638

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study on the effect of State laws on child marriages and forced marriages, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 20, 2020

Ms. MOORE (for herself and Mr. TAYLOR) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study on the effect of State laws on child marriages and forced marriages, and for other purposes.

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 “Status of Child Mar-
5 riages in the United States Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. STUDY AND REPORT ON CHILD AND FORCED MAR-**
7 **RIAGES.**

8 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Health and Human
9 Services (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall

1 conduct a study on the effect of State laws on child mar-
2 riages and forced marriages. Such study shall include an
3 evaluation of the following:

4 (1) State laws with respect to the minimum age
5 required to receive a marriage license and exceptions
6 to such minimum age requirement, including in the
7 cases of parental consent, judicial approval, emanci-
8 pation, and pregnancy.

9 (2) The effect of legislative reforms on—

10 (A) State laws described in paragraph (1);

11 and

12 (B) the number of child marriages in—

13 (i) each State that has enacted excep-
14 tions to such minimum age requirement;

15 and

16 (ii) States that are adjacent to a State
17 described in clause (i).

18 (3) The difficulty of obtaining data from each
19 State with respect to child marriages.

20 (4) The extent to which exceptions to the min-
21 imum age requirement increase the number of child
22 marriages that also qualify as a forced marriage.

23 (5) The extent to which child marriage leads
24 to—

25 (A) domestic violence;

1 (B) dating violence;

2 (C) sexual assault; and

3 (D) sex trafficking.

4 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 year after the date
5 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall complete the
6 study under subsection (a) and submit to the Committee
7 on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives
8 and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and
9 Pensions of the Senate a report containing the findings
10 of the study, including information that is disaggregated
11 by age and gender.

12 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 (1) STATE.—The term “State” means each of
14 the several States, the District of Columbia, each
15 commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United
16 States, and each federally recognized Indian Tribe.

17 (2) CHILD MARRIAGE.—The term “child mar-
18 riage” means a marriage in which a party to the
19 marriage has not attained the age of 18 at the time
20 of the marriage.

21 (3) FORCED MARRIAGE.—The term “forced
22 marriage” means a marriage that takes place with-
23 out the full and free consent of one or both parties
24 and typically involves force, fraud, or coercion.

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