

Child Marriage Prevention Act of 2024
Section-by-Section Summary
Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Dick Durbin (D-IL),
Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)

Sec. 1. Short Title.

- Establishes the short title of the bill as the “Child Marriage Prevention Act of 2024.”

Sec. 2. Findings.

- Provides statistical data quantifying child marriage and its harmful consequences in the United States.
- Establishes that this bill is the result of thorough analysis of the data and effects of child marriage in the United States.
- Establishes that federal intervention in eliminating child marriage is necessary as there are conflicting policies and state laws in place.

Sec. 3. Definition.

- Defines terms used throughout the bill, including “noncitizen” and “State.”

Sec. 4. Federal Commission to Address Child Marriage.

- Establishes a National Commission to Combat Child Marriage in the United States (“Commission”), within Health and Human Services (HHS), which would:
 - Conduct a comprehensive study on child marriage in the United States that examines laws and the absence of laws governing child marriage; how frequently these marriages occur; the circumstances under which such marriages occur; and the impact of those marriages on the minor;
 - Build on existing evaluations and avoid duplication by reviewing the findings and recommendations of state and federal entities examining child marriage;
 - Hold hearings, request information from federal agencies and other entities, and conduct listening sessions with child marriage survivors, advocates, and experts on child marriage; and
 - Issue an interim report to the President and Congress not later than one year after the date of the initial Commission meeting and a final report to the President, the HHS Secretary, and Congress not later than two years after that date.
- Directs the composition of the Commission to include ten members appointed by the President, the HHS Secretary, and Congressional leadership, which must include
 - a survivor of child marriage;
 - a representative of a nonprofit entity with expertise in working with survivors of child marriage;
 - a representative of a nonprofit entity with expertise in working with immigrant survivors of child marriage; and

- a representative of a nonprofit entity with expertise in working with State governments to limit child marriage.

Sec. 5. GAO Reports.

- Requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to submit a report to Congress, within three years from the enactment of the bill, describing federal laws, regulations, policies, and programs relevant to child marriage.
- Directs the GAO to submit a report to Congress, not later than one year after the enactment of the bill, and every two years thereafter through 2030, that assesses the extent to which: 1) noncitizens who were under 18 years of age on the date of marriage are admitted to the United States as beneficiaries of approved petitions submitted by United States citizen or lawful permanent resident spouses of the noncitizen; and 2) the United States has admitted nonimmigrant spouses who, on the date on which a nonimmigrant visa petition was submitted for the principal noncitizens, were under 18 years of age.

Sec. 6. Grant Program for State Task Forces to Examine Child Marriage.

- Allows the HHS Secretary to award grants to establish State-based task forces to examine child marriage in a particular state.
- Identifies qualifications for appointees on State-based task forces.
- Establishes duties for the State-based task force.

Sec. 7. State Initiatives to Eliminate Child Marriage.

- Authorizes the Attorney General to increase State funding under covered formula grants to incentivize state initiatives banning child marriage.
- Authorizes \$5,000,000 for fiscal years 2027 through 2032 if the National Commission to Combat Child Marriage in the United States submits its interim report.

Sec. 8. Federal Limitations on Child Marriage.

- Prohibits the use of any property owned, leased, used or otherwise controlled by the federal government from being used to facilitate a child marriage.

Sec. 9. Department of Justice Efforts to Address Child Marriage.

- Directs the Attorney General to establish a DOJ working group for the purpose of establishing a model state statute that prohibits child marriage.

Sec. 10. Modification to Immigration Provisions Relating to Marriage.

- Establishes that U.S. petitioners must be at least 18 years of age to petition for spousal and fiancé(e) visas and must have been at least 18 years of age at the time of marriage for that marriage to be valid for immigration purposes.
- Requires individuals sponsored for such visas to be at least 18 years of age at the time of the petition
 - Allows an exception for sponsored individuals for such visas who are at least 16 years of age if the Secretary of Homeland Security grants a waiver for compelling

humanitarian reasons arising from a risk of individualized and targeted harm to such noncitizen.

- Amends the definition of proxy marriage in Section 101(a)(35) of the Immigration and Nationality Act by replacing the current consummation requirement with a requirement that parties to a marriage have previously met in person within two years of the date of the ceremony for the proxy marriage to be valid.
- Establishes a public education mandate to provide educational materials in multiple languages on changes to immigration law, including on the website of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of State.
- Tasks the Department of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and the Department of Justice with promoting information on the harmful effects of child marriage and resources for support services.