

Ending Child Marriage, State By State

Thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have banned this insidious form of child abuse. In thirty-seven states, predators remain empowered.

At age thirteen, Vilas was forced to marry a man twice her age. “No one asked me. No one stopped it,” she [said](#). Instead of homework and band practice, her teenage years were filled with psychological and sexual violence. She “escaped” into homelessness. “I survived by trading my body for shelter and food. After all, it seemed to carry no other value,” she said. Today, Vilas is a leader in the movement to end child marriage in the United States.

Child marriage¹ is not a romantic relic from a bygone era. It is child abuse. **Here are the facts about child marriage in the United States, in 2025.**

10 Years Ago, Child Marriage was Legal in All 50 States

Since launching the [national movement to end child and forced marriage](#) in 2016, Tahirih Justice Center has worked with survivor-advocates to ban or limit this form of child abuse in numerous states. Here’s how the states stack up today.

Child Marriage Banned (13 states plus DC)

Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington

Child Marriage Legal (37 states)

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

States’ laws on when children can be married vary. Only a total ban on marriage under the age of majority will fully protect children.

¹ “Child marriage” is defined as a marriage in which one or both spouses is under the age of majority: generally eighteen. In the United States, marriage laws are determined by individual states.

The Movement to End Child Marriage, Today

Washington, DC is the [latest jurisdiction to ban child marriage](#), while the South Dakota legislature narrowly rejected a ban on child marriage in 2025.

Bans are currently under consideration in Arizona, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, and Texas. West Virginia is considering a bill to further limit, but not ban, child marriage and Utah recently passed one.

New Hampshire's child marriage ban went into effect in 2025. Unfortunately, the legislature is considering weakening the law to allow members of the U.S. military to marry children.

Resources

- State laws to ban or limit child marriage since 2016 ([summary](#); [map](#))
- Report: "Making Progress, But Still Falling Short: A Report on the Movement to End Child Marriage in America" ([Tahirih Justice Center](#))
- Forced Marriage Initiative ([website](#))