

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 011
(I-19)

Introduced by: Michigan

Subject: End Child Marriage

Referred to: Reference Committee on Amendments to Constitution and Bylaws

Whereas, With the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations defined a child as any person younger than 18; this definition has since been used to establish quantifiable targets for international development including child marriage; and

Whereas, The United States Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, released in 2016 by the State Department, states that marriage before age 18 is a “human rights abuse” that produces devastating effect on a girl’s life; and

Whereas, Between 2000 and 2010 more than 167,000 children across 38 states were married, mostly to men 18 or older while the remaining twelve states and the District of Columbia did not track this information; and

Whereas, Child marriage in the United States is associated with a 23 percent greater risk of disease onset, including heart attack, diabetes, cancer, and stroke; and

Whereas, Child marriage is associated with higher rates of sexually transmitted infections, early pregnancies, divorce, and intimate partner violence than women married at 21; and

Whereas, Mothers around the world who are under the age of 18 have a 35 percent to 55 percent higher risk of delivering a preterm or low-birthweight infant than mothers older than 19 years; and

Whereas, Child marriage in the United States has been associated with significantly increased risk of almost all psychiatric disorders; approximately 35 percent of women who were married as children presented with psychiatric disorders and 53 percent had a lifetime history of psychiatric illnesses; and

Whereas, The majority of marriages among immigrant children occur after their arrival to the United States with only a minority being wed outside of the country; and

Whereas, Statutory rape charges when young girls become pregnant may be avoided and have been motivation to encourage marriage between the offender and the girl; and

Whereas, Delaware was the first state in the United States to ban child marriage with no exception based on the consideration that children under 18 are unable to file for divorce or seek shelter at a domestic violence shelter if needed; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association oppose the practice of child marriage
2 (New HOD Policy); and be it further

3
4 RESOLVED, That our AMA advocate for the passage of state and federal legislation to end the
5 practice of child marriage. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Modest - between \$1,000 - \$5,000

Received: 10/03/19

Sources:

1. Koski A, Heymann J. Child marriage in the united states: how common is the practice, and which children are at greatest risk? Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health. 2018; 50(2):59-65.
2. U.S. Department of State. U.S Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/254904.pdf>. Published March 2016.
3. Reiss F. Why can 12-year-olds still get married in the United States? The Washington Post. February 10, 2017.
4. Shaffer C. Michigan legislature tackles child marriage. Michigan Radio. November 30, 2018.
5. Dupre ME, Meadows SO. Disaggregating the effects of marital trajectories on health. Journal of Family Issues. 2007; 28(5):623-652. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X06296296>.
6. Strat YL, Dubertret C, Foll BL. Child marriage in the united states and its association with mental health in women. Pediatrics. 2011; 128(3):524-530. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-0961
7. United Nations Children's Fund. Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects. https://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR..pdf. 2014.
8. WORLD Policy Analysis Center. Assessing National Action on Protection from Child Marriage. https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/sites/default/files/WORLD_Fact_Sheet_Legal_Protection_Against_Child_Marriage_2015.pdf. March 2015.
9. Nour NM. Child marriage: a silent health and human rights issue. Reviews in Obstetrics & Gynecology. 2009; 2(1):51-56. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2672998/pdf/RIOG002001_0051.pdf.
10. Hamilton, VE. The age of marital capacity: reconsidering civil recognition of adolescent marriage. William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository. 2012; 1430:1818-1862. <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/facpubs/1430>.
11. Feleke B. Delaware becomes first US state to fully ban child marriage. CNN. May 12, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/12/us/delaware-child-marriage-ban/index.html>