

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3357

To protect girls in developing countries through the prevention of child marriage, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 2011

Ms. MCCOLLUM (for herself, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. LATOURETTE, Ms. DEGETTE, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. TIBERI, Ms. MOORE, Mr. DENT, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. MORAN, Mr. McDERMOTT, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. MALONEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HONDA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. McNERNEY, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. KIND, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. RICHARDSON, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CARNAHAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mrs. CAPPS, and Ms. DELAURO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To protect girls in developing countries through the prevention of child marriage, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Child Marriage Vio-
3 lates the Human Rights of Girls Act of 2011”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Child marriage, also known as “forced mar-
7 riage” or “early marriage”, is a harmful traditional
8 practice that deprives girls of their basic human
9 rights.

10 (2) Child marriage as a traditional practice, as
11 well as through coercion or force, is a violation of ar-
12 ticle 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human
13 Rights, which states, “Marriage shall be entered into
14 only with the free and full consent of intending
15 spouses.”.

16 (3) According to the United Nations Children’s
17 Fund (UNICEF), an estimated 60,000,000 girls in
18 developing countries now ages 20 to 24 were mar-
19 ried under the age of 18, and if present trends con-
20 tinue, more than 100,000,000 more girls in devel-
21 oping countries will be married as children over the
22 next decade, according to the Population Council.

23 (4) The rape, violent abuse, and physical exploi-
24 tation of young girls, at times as young as ten years
25 old, are frequent consequences of children forced

1 into marriages in countries such as Bangladesh
2 where 57 percent of girls are married by age 15.

3 (5) Factors perpetuating child marriage include
4 poverty, a lack of educational or employment oppor-
5 tunities for girls, parental concerns to ensure sexual
6 relations within marriage, the dowry system, and the
7 perceived lack of value of girls.

8 (6) Child marriage has negative effects on girls'
9 health, including significantly increased risk of ma-
10 ternal death and morbidity, obstetric fistula, sexually
11 transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and in-
12 fant mortality and morbidity.

13 (7) Girls' schooling, creating safe community
14 spaces for girls, and programs for skills building for
15 out-of-school girls are all effective and evidence-
16 based strategies for preventing child marriage and
17 creating a pathway to the empowerment of girls by
18 addressing conditions of poverty, low status, and
19 norms that contribute to child marriage.

20 (8) Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
21 has stated that, "Stopping child marriage is not just
22 a must for moral or human rights reasons—it lays
23 the foundation for so many other things we hope to
24 achieve. Primary education. Improved child and ma-

1 ternal health. Sustainable economic development
2 that includes girls.”.

3 **SEC. 3. CHILD MARRIAGE DEFINED.**

4 In this Act, the term “child marriage” means the
5 marriage of a girl or boy, not yet the minimum age for
6 marriage stipulated in law in the country in which the girl
7 or boy is a resident or, where there is no such law, under
8 the age of 18.

9 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

10 It is the sense of Congress that—

11 (1) child marriage is a violation of human
12 rights and the prevention and elimination of child
13 marriage should be a foreign policy goal of the
14 United States;

15 (2) the practice of child marriage undermines
16 United States investments in foreign assistance to
17 promote education and skills building for girls, re-
18 duce maternal and child mortality, reduce maternal
19 illness, halt the transmission of HIV/AIDS, prevent
20 gender-based violence, and reduce poverty; and

21 (3) educational opportunities for girls, economic
22 opportunities for women, and reducing maternal and
23 child mortality are critical to achieving the global
24 health and development objectives of the United
25 States, including efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS.

1 **SEC. 5. RESEARCH AND DATA.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, the Ad-
3 ministrator of the United States Agency for International
4 Development, and the heads of other relevant departments
5 and agencies shall—

6 (1) collect and make publicly available data on
7 the incidence of child marriage in countries that re-
8 ceive foreign or development assistance from the
9 United States where the practice of child marriage
10 is prevalent, including to the extent appropriate the
11 countries listed in subsection (b); and

12 (2) collect and make publicly available data on
13 the impact of the incidence of child marriage and
14 the age at marriage on progress in meeting key de-
15 velopment goals.

16 (b) COUNTRIES.—The countries referred to in sub-
17 section (a)(1) are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina
18 Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the
19 Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Repub-
20 lic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, India, Mada-
21 gascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua,
22 Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda,
23 and Zambia.

24 **SEC. 6. DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S COUNTRY REPORTS ON**
25 **HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES.**

26 The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 is amended—

1 (1) in section 116 (22 U.S.C. 2151n), by add-
2 ing at the end the following new subsection:

3 “(g)(1) The report required by subsection (d) shall
4 include, for each country in which child marriage is preva-
5 lent, including to the extent appropriate the countries list-
6 ed in paragraph (2), a description of the status of the
7 practice of child marriage in such country and the type
8 and amount of United State foreign assistance being used
9 for the primary goal of preventing child marriage in such
10 country.

11 “(2) The countries referred to in paragraph (1) are
12 Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the
13 Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic
14 of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia,
15 Guinea, Honduras, India, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mo-
16 zambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Si-
17 erra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

18 “(3) In this subsection, the term ‘child marriage’
19 means the marriage of a girl or boy, not yet the minimum
20 age for marriage stipulated in law or under the age of
21 18 if no such law exists, in the country in which such girl
22 or boy is a resident.”; and

23 (2) in section 502B (22 U.S.C. 2304), by add-
24 ing at the end the following new subsection:

1 “(j)(1) The report required by subsection (b) shall
2 include, for each country in which child marriage is preva-
3 lent, including to the extent appropriate the countries list-
4 ed in paragraph (2), a description of the status of the
5 practice of child marriage in such country and the type
6 and amount of United State foreign assistance being used
7 for the primary goal of preventing child marriage in such
8 country.

9 “(2) The countries referred to in paragraph (1) are
10 Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the
11 Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic
12 of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia,
13 Guinea, Honduras, India, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mo-
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20 or boy is a resident.”.

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