



## FLORIDA CHILD MARRIAGE LEGISLATION

### SAMPLE SUPPORT

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#### **Sample Subject:**

End Child Marriage in Florida: Pass Legislation that Sets Minimum Age for Marriage at 18, with No Exceptions

#### **Sample Text:**

I am writing to urge you to support child marriage bill [HB 71/ SB 140](#) , which sets 18 years old as the minimum age for marriage in the state of Florida, with no exceptions. This bill reserves marriage, a serious legal contract, for those who have reached the age of majority. Enacting this law would send a strong message that child marriage is not acceptable in our state.

This legislation is important for the state of Florida because it will remove all exceptions for child marriage under 18, including for emancipated minors, those minors who are expecting a child, or minors who receive parental consent.

Allowing minors to marry early has many negative consequences, such as an increased risk of divorce, a higher chance of living in poverty, discontinuing education prematurely, and physical and mental health consequences. Children who have not yet reached the age of majority can easily be forced or coerced into marriage or trapped in an abusive marriage. Minors being coerced into marriage may fear familial violence should they refuse to comply, or they may be physically or emotionally manipulated into accepting an unwanted marriage. Minors may also not have the resources to find a way out of the situation. They face significant legal and practical barriers if they try to leave home, enter a domestic violence shelter, retain an attorney, file a legal action such as a divorce, and more. This is not acceptable for our state and we must protect our minors from these dangers.

Additionally, there is currently no state that has a bright line minimum age for marriage as 18. Florida can lead the country in protecting minors from the dangers of child marriage.

No child, regardless of their situation, should face the dangers of child marriage. I therefore urge you to pass legislation that would ban child marriage, without exceptions, in Florida.