

District

Dear Representative,

Between the years 2000 and 2010, nearly 250,000 girls under the age of 18, who are minors designated as children, were married in the US, many of them to adult men.

Girls who get married as children, compared to women who marry over age 21,

* are three times more likely to be beaten by their spouses;
* are 31% more likely to live in poverty;
* are 50% more likely to drop out of high school;
* are four times less likely to graduate from college;
* face a [23% higher risk of heart attack](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0192513X06296296), diabetes, cancer, and stroke;
* are at increased risk for psychiatric disorders; and
* are likely to be in a marriage that will end in divorce.

Children who marry are often trapped. They cannot get a job, a car, a driver’s license, or sign a lease. Domestic abuse shelters cannot accept minors, and staff at children’s shelters often must inform parents of the child’s location. Girls attempting to flee abusive relationships have nowhere to go.

It is time to end the exploitation of children through child marriage. I call on you to pass comprehensive legislation to protect our state’s children and to end child marriage.

Sincerely,

Name (please print)

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Address, City, State

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Email address

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