



# WREN

Women's  
Rights &  
Empowerment  
Network

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Visit [scwren.org](http://scwren.org) and join the movement.
- Share this information with friends and community members.
- Keep up-to-date with this and similar legislation by following WREN on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Invest in WREN at [scwren.org/donate](http://scwren.org/donate).

## THE POLICY

### Ending Child Marriage Act (S.395)

## OVERVIEW

Child marriage has devastating, lifelong consequences for individuals, and also undermines the health and well-being of our families and communities. A minimum marriage age of 18, without exceptions, is the strongest, simplest and most effective way to stop child marriage and its harmful consequences.

Women who marry as girls face:

- **High divorce rates** (up to 80%);
- **High drop-out rates** – child brides are 50% more likely to drop out of high school and four times less likely to graduate from college;
- **Increased risk of poverty** – up to 31% greater likelihood – and teen mothers who marry and later divorce can face *more than double* the likelihood of future poverty;
- **More medical and mental health problems** – including some psychiatric disorders at rates 3 times higher than among those who marry as adults; and
- **Greater vulnerability to domestic violence** – girls age 16-19 experience intimate partner violence victimization rates that are higher than the national average, and an early marriage can isolate a girl and subject her to that risk round-the-clock.<sup>1</sup>



- A recent report by the Post and Courier found that over the last 20 years, there have been more than 7,000 girls married in South Carolina.<sup>2</sup>
- Of the more than 7,000 marriages that occurred among children over the last 20 years, more than 6,000 of these girls were 16 or 17.
- Statistically, 16 or 17 year old girls are among the most vulnerable people to intimate partner violence.

<sup>1</sup> Tahirih Justice Center (2018). *Child marriage in the United States: A serious problem with a simple first-step solution*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2UtaRTM>

<sup>2</sup> Sausser, L. (2018, June 21). In SC, pregnant girls as young as 12 can marry. There've been 7,000 child brides in 20 years. *Post and Courier*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Mg1dzS>