

# Child Marriage: a National Crisis

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Presented by Deanna Wilks



# *Child marriage & Key Terms*

- ❑ **Arranged marriage** - both the bride and the groom consent to have their marriage arranged (with varying degrees of choice about when and whom to wed).
  
- ❑ **Forced marriage** - one or both of them is coerced into the marriage and does not give full, free, informed consent.

# *What enables child marriage to take place?*

- Parental force
- Religious beliefs
- Prevention of premarital sex (control their child's sexuality)
- If the child is already pregnant
- To receive a dowry

# *Activity #1*

Take out your devices! Please type sli.do into your web browsers.

**Q: What effects do you think child marriage victims may suffer from?**

# *Effects of Child Marriage*

- ❑ Domestic violence
- ❑ Lack of education
- ❑ Isolation from family and friends
- ❑ Sexual abuse and unwanted pregnancies
- ❑ Emotional abuse
- ❑ Self-harm
- ❑ Suicide

# *Effects of Child Marriage*

- ❑ 23% increased risk of:
  - ❑ Heart attack
  - ❑ Diabetes
  - ❑ Cancer
  - ❑ Stroke
- ❑ Higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases
- ❑ Higher death rates resulting from:
  - ❑ Childbirth
  - ❑ Unwanted pregnancies
  - ❑ Pregnancy termination
- ❑ Increased risk of psychiatric disorders
  - ❑ Antisocial personality disorder
  - ❑ Major depressive disorder
  - ❑ Nicotine dependence
  - ❑ Phobias

***“My Mom Took Me Overseas  
and Forced Me Into Being a Teen Bride”  
by Yasmine Koenig***



# *“My Mom Took Me Overseas and Forced Me Into Being a Teen Bride” by Yasmine Koenig*

- ❑ Yasmine is an American citizen born to Palestinian parents
- ❑ Her mother took her to Palestine “to visit family members”
- ❑ Forced into marriage at 15 years old to a 25 year old man
- ❑ Lived in Palestine for 3 months; didn’t even know her husband’s last name
- ❑ Secretly communicated with American friends through Facebook
- ❑ Contacted U.S. Embassy



# *“My Mom Took Me Overseas and Forced Me Into Being a Teen Bride” by Yasmine Koenig*

- ❑ U.S. Embassy brought Yasmine back to America
  - ❑ Disowned by family
  - ❑ Lived in several foster homes
  - ❑ Took mother to court to revoke parental rights
  - ❑ Adopted at age 16
- ❑ Currently studies at Illinois State University

# *Child marriage in the U.S.*

## *at a glance:*

### HOW DO STATE LAWS ON MINIMUM MARRIAGE AGE COMPARE?

*In October 2017*

- **25 states** do not set any age floor by statute
- **3 states** (Virginia, Texas, and New York, in order of enactment) limit marriage to legal adults
- In **8 states and Washington, DC**, clerks alone – without judges – can approve marriages of all minors
- **Only 17 states** require judges to consider the minors' best interests
- **9 states** expressly permit pregnancy to lower the minimum marriage age

via  
Tahirih Justice Center

# *Child marriage in the U.S.*

- ❑ Between 2000 and 2010, over 160,000 people under age 17 were married in the U.S.
- ❑ New Hampshire is one of many U.S. states which allows 13 year olds to be married with judicial consent
- ❑ California tried to abolish underage marriage, but had to adjust the bill to allow underage marriage with judicial consent
- ❑ In May 2017, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie vetoed a bill that would prohibit people under age 18 to be married

## *Activity #2*

**Q: What are two strategies that could stop and prevent child marriage?**

Each group must write their ideas on a single sheet of paper with your names on top. This will be collected.

# *Unchained At Last*

The only non-profit organization in the U.S. that helps forced marriage victims of all ages.



## *Activity #3*

Take out your devices! Please type sli.do into your web browsers.

**Q: What is one word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of child marriage?**

# *What you can do to help!*

- ❑ Visit [unchainedatlast.org](http://unchainedatlast.org)
  - ❑ Click “Get Involved”, then “Tell Your Legislators to Stop Child Marriage”
  - ❑ Submit the pre-written message or write your own

OR...

- ❑ Visit [unchainedatlast.org](http://unchainedatlast.org)
  - ❑ Click “Unchained Club”
  - ❑ Learn how to open a chapter at your school