

RESOLUTION 6

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ELIMINATING CHILD MARRIAGE IN OHIO

- WHEREAS** The United Nations considers child marriage to be a **human rights violation** and calls for its elimination worldwide; and
- WHEREAS** The UN definition of child marriage is: “Any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child”; and
- WHEREAS** The Ohio State Department calls marriage before 18 a “human rights abuse”; and
- WHEREAS** According to UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund, child marriage: violates children's rights to education, health, safety, and free consent, increases risks of domestic violence, early pregnancy, and maternal death, disproportionately affects girls, and often traps children in poverty and reduced opportunity; and
- WHEREAS** A 17-year-old in Ohio can marry only if all required conditions are met, including: approval from a juvenile court, parental/guardian consultation, appointment of a guardian ad litem for the minor, a finding by the court that the decision is voluntary and in the minor’s best interests, and the other spouse being no more than four years older; and
- WHEREAS** Minors before 18 cannot easily leave home, enter a shelter, retain an attorney or independently bring a legal action; and
- WHEREAS** A 17 year old is automatically emancipated when the juvenile court approves their marriage, and they may lose their parents’ support, regardless of the teens’ financial circumstances; and
- WHEREAS** The judicial review process, even with its many supposed safeguards, puts the onus on terrified teens whose parents are forcing them to marry to figure out how to signal their predicament to the court without facing repercussions at home; and,
- WHEREAS** The Ohio Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW/OHIO) supports economic equity, civil rights, victims rights and health both physical and mental; and
- WHEREAS** BPW/OHIO supports SB341/HB670 that would make the marriage age 18 no exception. It costs nothing, harms no one and ends human rights abuse.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

That this resolution on eliminating child marriage in Ohio be sent to the members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary members where SB341 has had several hearings and request passage of this bill in their committee and send it to the floor for a vote.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED

That BPW/OHIO members contact their Ohio legislators to educate them about this needed change in Ohio laws and request their leadership in getting this bill passed and implemented in this session.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED

That this resolution be sent to Governor DeWine to educate and prepare him to be ready to sign this bill into law before he leaves office.

Signed by: *Cynthia A McCabe*

Cyndi McCabe 2026 Resolution Chair

May 15-17, 2026

RESOLVED AND ADOPTED THIS 17th DAY OF May, 2026.