

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY SIGNS CHILD MARRIAGE BAN INTO LAW

TRENTON - Governor Phil Murphy today signed Senate Bill No. 427, which prohibits anyone under the age of 18 from marrying or entering into a civil union. New Jersey is now the second state in the nation to ban child marriage under all circumstances.

"In New Jersey, we are dedicated to protecting children by putting an end to child marriages by raising the minimum age to 18," **said Governor Murphy**. "Studies have consistently showed that minors who enter into marriage – particularly young women – are less likely to graduate from high school and college and more likely to suffer domestic abuse and live in poverty. I am proud to join with the Legislature to make New Jersey a national leader on this important human rights issue."

The legislation bars the issuance of marriage or civil union licenses to all persons under the age of 18. Previously, New Jersey minors who were 16 or 17 could get married with parental consent. Minors under the age of 16 could be married after obtaining parental consent and approval from a judge. According to the New Jersey Department of Health, more than 3,600 minors got married in New Jersey between 1995 and 2015.

Research has shown that young women married at 18 or younger suffer negative psychological, social, educational, and financial consequences. The legislation will play a crucial role in protecting New Jersey's children and preventing them from being forced or coerced into marriages.

Bill sponsors include Senators Nellie Pou, Loretta Weinberg, Sandra B. Cunningham and Joseph A. Lagana as well as Assembly Members Nancy F. Munoz, Reed Gusciora, Pamela R. Lampitt, Raj Mukherji and Shavonda E. Sumter.

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