RESOLUTION NO. 2021-R-038

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA, SUPPORTING STATE LEGISLATION TO END CHILD MARRIAGE.

WHEREAS, Child Marriage, a formal marriage or informal union where one or both parties are under the age of 18\(^1\), is defined as a human rights abuse by the Department of State\(^2\), UNICEF\(^3\), and Human Rights Watch\(^4\); and

WHEREAS, each year minors are coerced and forced into Child Marriage in cities across the United States; and

WHEREAS, marriage license records from a sample of state health departments across the country reveal that, in a 15-year period between 2000 and 2015, more than 200,000 minors were married in the United States, mostly girls married to adult men\(^5\); and

WHEREAS, as a member of the United Nations, the United States adopted the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including a commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development goals, including Goal 5 to "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," and specifically target 5.3: "Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation\(^6\); and,

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association has called for an end to Child Marriage stating, "Child marriage is associated with higher rates of sexually transmitted infections, early pregnancies, divorce, and intimate partner violence than women married at age 21"\(^7\); and,
WHEREAS, the detrimental effects of Child Marriage are many, including but not limited to, an adverse effect on the child’s health, education, and employment opportunities as proven by UN Women\(^8\) and the World Bank\(^9\); and,

WHEREAS, minors in unwanted or abusive marriages suffer social isolation from their support networks like school, friends, and family, which contributes to their poor mental health\(^10\); and

WHEREAS, young women and girls ages 15-19 face intimate partner violence victimization rates almost three times the national average\(^11\); and

WHEREAS, 70%-80% of Child Marriages end in divorce\(^12\); and

WHEREAS, minors who marry early are more likely to “discontinue their formal educations prematurely, earn low wages, and live in poverty.”\(^13\) Girls who marry early are 50% more likely to drop out of high school and four times less likely to graduate from college\(^14\); and

WHEREAS, a minor’s understanding of their legal rights and access to practical resources to avoid or abandon an unwanted or abusive marriage are far more limited than adult men and women may have; and

WHEREAS, in the state of California, there is no minimum age to marry and no restrictions on the age differences between the two parties (e.g., between adult men and minor girls); and

WHEREAS, in the state of California, limited reporting on Child Marriage statistics from the majority of counties has hampered the state’s ability to track the prevalence of Child Marriage; and
WHEREAS, Child Marriage in the United States is not confined to any religious or cultural group; and American children of all backgrounds are at risk in California cities because the law permits marriage before the age of majority; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming evidence of adverse effects on the minor’s wellbeing and the remaining risk of abusive relationships with older men calls for an “End Child Marriage Under 18 No Exceptions” law; and

WHEREAS, the states of Delaware, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey already passed laws ending Child Marriage for all minors, without exception; and

WHEREAS, the City of Culver City has determined that it is a moral imperative and undeniably in the best public interest of the City to protect all minors from Child Marriage.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Culver City DOES HEREBY RESOLVE as follows:

1. The above recitals are hereby adopted by the City Council of the City of Culver City; and

2. The City Council hereby calls on the California State Legislature to introduce and pass legislation to “End Child Marriage Under 18, No Exceptions”; and

3. The City Council hereby calls upon other California municipalities to consider adopting resolutions showing their commitment to end Child Marriage; and

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4. The City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager, or designee, to announce notice of the City Council’s adoption of this Resolution on the City’s social media platforms.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this 10th day of May 2021.

ALEX FISCH, Mayor
City of Culver City, California

ATTEST:

JEREMY GREEN, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CAROL A. SCHWAB, City Attorney

5 http://apps.frontline.org/child-marriage-by-the-numbers/
6 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sgd5
Certification of Resolution No. 2021-R038

I, Jeremy Green, City Clerk of the City of Culver City, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council, which was held on the 10th day of May 2021, at the Mike Balkman Council Chambers by the following vote:

AYES: Eriksson, McMorrin, Vera, Lee, Fisch

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Certified on this 10th day of May 2021, at the City of Culver City.

Jeremy Green, CMC, City Clerk
Ex-Officio Clerk of the City Council
City of Culver City, State of California