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## **Momentum Builds to End Child Marriage in California** *AB 1286 Will Strengthen County Reporting Requirements*

**SACRAMENTO** – In a critical step to end child marriage, Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris has introduced AB 1286 which passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee with unanimous bipartisan support. This bill requires counties to report the number of child marriages to the state on a quarterly basis. California is one of only 13 states that does not have a minimum age requirement for marriage. By increasing this data, California will have a stronger case to ban child marriage.

“California is one of only 13 states that does not have a minimum age requirement for marriage,” said AB 1286 author **Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach)**. “Previous legislative efforts to end child marriage in California have fallen flat, in part because opponents assert that this is not a real problem. This data will help substantiate what we know to be true – child marriage is a persistent and pervasive problem in California.”

Nonprofit organizations and the U.S. Census Bureau estimate that at least 13,000 child marriages have occurred in California over a five-year span. The Pew Research Center estimates that California has the sixth-highest number of child marriages in the country. However, California counties and state agencies have failed to provide accurate counts due to weak data collection requirements.

“Tragically, child marriage is an ongoing problem even here in California. We applaud the unanimous vote in the Assembly Appropriations Committee and thank the members for voting yes on AB 1286,” said **Rima Nashashibi, Founder and President, Global Hope 365 and the CA Coalition to End Child Marriage**. “This legislation shows how important it is that every elected and public official embrace their responsibility in ending forced child marriages. If we all do our part, we truly can end the scourge of this type of child abuse.”

AB 1286 requires counties to submit child marriage data four times a year to the State Registrar and report back to the Legislature. This data will inform the scope of harm which will empower human rights groups and future Legislative efforts to work against the abusive practice of child marriage.

The full Assembly will vote on this measure later this month.

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