

Testimony in Support of SB 198: Ending Child Marriage
Presented to Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
May 22, 2018

Chair Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan and Distinguished Committee Members:

Thousands of lives are ruined daily because we are letting our girls get married at such young ages which can cause serious mental/physical problems. We need to change the laws and raise the minimum age to wed in Ohio to 18, without exceptions.

I am Naila Amin, Activist, Survivor of a child forced marriage, and currently building the Naila Amin Foundation. This matter is near and dear to me because I was engaged at 8 and married at 15. Even though I was still living in New York, I was taken back to Pakistan and forced to marry a first cousin who was 13 years older than me. I was rescued by the state department and child protective services in March of 2005. I lost my youth and my mental health is just not the same. The happy go lucky little girl is gone. I can go months now without laughing. He robbed me of my childhood. My body and soul were taken from me by force. Luckily I did not have any children with this man. That could have caused health problems or even death. The solution is to pass HB337 and give these young girls a fighting chance. It should not be legal to marry off your child under 18 in any state. We have to be the solution. I won't stop fighting to end this atrocity till some laws are changed because I never want another child to suffer the anguish that I have.

Naila Amin