



Youth for Neurodiversity Inc.

August 15, 2026

The Honorable Members of the California State Senate
California State Capitol
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT for AB 1267 (Pellerin), Marriage: Prohibition on Minors

Dear Members of the California State Senate,

On behalf of Youth for Neurodiversity Inc. (YND), I am writing to express our strong support for AB 1267, which would prohibit any person under 18 from being issued a marriage license or establishing a domestic partnership in California. It eliminates the current exceptions that allow minors to marry or form domestic partnerships with parental consent and a court order.¹

Youth for Neurodiversity Inc. is a California-based, international nonprofit dedicated to empowering neurodivergent youth for success, advancing strengths-based understanding, youth rights, inclusive spaces, assistive technology, and youth mental health. Our network includes more than 70 student leaders and allies with a growing focus on neurodivergent girls, who present differently and are disproportionately undiagnosed.

As a youth-led organization, we strongly support AB 1267 because marriage is a significant legal contract with profound and lasting consequences. Child marriage disproportionately affects girls and perpetuates gender inequities, including through disrupted education, early motherhood, and diminished future opportunities. All young people under 18 should have the opportunity to reach adulthood with the legal independence, life experience, and protections necessary to make such a consequential decision.

California already restricts minors from voting, signing most contracts, and other adult legal acts. Allowing marriage before 18 creates a dangerous inconsistency that exposes young people, including neurodivergent youth who face additional barriers in asserting boundaries or recognizing coercion, to lasting harm, interrupted education, and reduced autonomy.

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee of the Rights of the Child considers child marriage to be a form of forced marriage, one that limits education and forces them into early motherhood. Per UNESCO, an alarming 87% of married teen girls (aged 15–17) are no longer in school and 76% have children already. This cycle of early marriage and motherhood disempowers girls from reaching their full potential.²

About 17 states in the U.S. have already made child marriage under 18 illegal.³ Unchained At Last estimates that approximately 35,000 minors were married in California between 2000 and 2021 and continues to occur in our state.⁴ Beyond the known risks of disempowering girls and their futures, child marriage also puts them at risk for human trafficking.

For these reasons, Youth for Neurodiversity respectfully urges the California State Senate to support AB 1267 and advance it toward passage. California has an opportunity to strengthen youth protections and be the nation's leading example in championing policies empowering youth to reach their full potential and future success.

Thank you for your leadership on youth-centered policies, education, health, and wellbeing. We would be pleased to provide additional student perspectives or testimony in support of this bill as needed. I can be reached at info@youthfornd.org.

Sincerely,

Aashna Parsa

Aashna Parsa
Founder and President
Youth for Neurodiversity Inc.

¹ California Legislative Information, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB1267

² UNESCO, *How marriage laws can contribute to protecting every girl's right to education*, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/how-marriage-laws-can-contribute-protecting-every-girls-right-education>

³ *Newsweek*, "Map Shows Where Child Marriage Is Illegal Amid California Ban Push." <https://www.newsweek.com/map-shows-where-child-marriage-illegal-amid-california-ban-push-12303120>

⁴ *Unchained At Last, United States' Child Marriage Problem*, <https://unchainedatlast.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Unchained-at-Last-US-Child-Marriage-Problem.pdf>