

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 2140
OFFERED BY MRS. WAGNER OF MISSOURI**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Preventing Child Mar-
3 riage in Displaced Populations Act”.

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) According to UNICEF, 12 million girls
7 marry before the age of 18 every year.

8 (2) Early marriage denies children, especially
9 girls, their right to make vital decisions about their
10 well-being, including relating to their health, family,
11 and career. Child brides are less likely to finish their
12 education, and are at higher risk for abuse, con-
13 tracting HIV, and dying while pregnant or giving
14 birth.

15 (3) Child marriage also imposes substantial eco-
16 nomic costs to developing countries, impeding devel-
17 opment and prosperity gains.

1 (4) Displaced populations are particularly vul-
2 nerable to child marriage, in communities where pov-
3 erty, instability, and displacement put pressure on
4 families to marry children, particularly young girls,
5 off at a young age.

6 (5) One United Nations (UN) study found that
7 child marriage rates were four times higher among
8 displaced Syrian refugees than among Syrians before
9 the crisis. This indicates that displacement, insta-
10 bility, and poverty are driving child marriages.

11 (6) United Nations agencies, including
12 UNICEF and UNHCR, have acknowledged the dan-
13 gers of child marriage and taken steps to address its
14 risk in the populations they serve.

15 (7) The UN Joint Program on Child Marriage
16 supports this work by building the resilience of pop-
17 ulations to indirectly prevent child marriage and by
18 generating new data and evidence on the prevalence
19 of child marriage in humanitarian and fragile set-
20 tings. For example, in Uganda, the UN Joint Pro-
21 gram on Child Marriage helped 27,000 adolescent
22 girls strengthen critical skills through school clubs
23 and Go Back to School campaigns, as well as life-
24 skills and financial literacy training.

1 (8) After the UN Joint Program on Child Mar-
2 riage identified Yemen as one of its focus countries,
3 65,000 people, of whom 45,000 are adolescents,
4 were reached with awareness raising activities on the
5 harms of child marriage in 2018 alone. As a result,
6 local council representatives, elders, and community
7 leaders from six districts signed a pledge to support
8 advocacy efforts to end child marriage.

9 **SEC. 3. PREVENTING CHILD MARRIAGE IN DISPLACED POP-**
10 **ULATIONS.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall direct the
12 United States Permanent Representative to the United
13 Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United
14 States at the United Nations to call for an adoption of
15 an agreed-upon definition of “child marriage” across
16 United Nations agencies.

17 (b) STRATEGY.—The President shall direct the
18 United States Permanent Representative to the United
19 Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United
20 States at the United Nations to call for the development
21 of a comprehensive strategy to address child marriage in
22 refugee settlements administered by the United Nations.
23 Such strategy should include the following:

24 (1) A mandate to regularly collect and report
25 data related to the number of known or suspected

1 child marriages taking place inside each such settle-
2 ment.

3 (2) Protocols for United Nations personnel re-
4 garding prevention and monitoring of child mar-
5 riages inside each such settlement.

6 (3) A description of United Nations programs
7 administered at such settlements that include—

8 (A) physical, mental, and emotional reha-
9 bilitation and support to children who have ex-
10 tricated themselves from child marriage; and

11 (B) alternatives to child marriage, such as
12 education initiatives.

13 (4) Protocols regarding how United Nations
14 personnel should—

15 (A) report adults participating in illegal
16 child marriages in each such settlement; and

17 (B) monitor the prosecution of such adults
18 by the authorities of the country in which the
19 settlement at issue is located.

20 (c) RESEARCH.—The President shall direct the
21 United States Permanent Representative to the United
22 Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United
23 States at the United Nations to advocate for the United
24 Nations and its appropriate agencies to include, as appro-
25 priate, in all of its research into child marriage the rela-

1 tionship between child marriage and violence against girls,
2 including young children and infants.

3 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) CHILD MARRIAGE.—The term “child mar-
5 riage” means a formal marriage or informal union
6 involving at least one person younger than age 18.

7 (2) ILLEGAL CHILD MARRIAGE.—The term “il-
8 legal child marriage” means a child marriage that is
9 illegal under the laws of the country in which the
10 child marriage occurs.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill To prevent
child marriage in refugee settlements administered by the
United Nations, and for other purposes.”.

