



1119 K Street, 2nd Floor | Sacramento, California 95814
T: (916) 313-4000 | F: (916) 313-4066
www.CAcatholic.org

June 22, 2026

The Honorable Thomas Umberg, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1267 (Pellerin) Marriage: prohibition on minors – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Umberg and Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

The California Catholic Conference **SUPPORTS AB 1267 (Pellerin)**, as amended 6/11/2026, increasing the age of consent for marriage to 18 in the state of California.

Currently, minors of any age can legally marry under California law, with parental approval and judicial review. An [estimated 23,588](#) child marriages took place in the state between 2000 and 2018, and census data shows more than 8,000 children enter marriage every year in our state.

Minor marriages often involve a young girl with an older man, and may be forced or coerced by parents, used to procure a visa for a foreign relative, as a cover for statutory rape, [commercial sexual exploitation](#), or labor trafficking. Without their parents' financial support, it is more difficult for minors to be economically independent or have the means of securing housing stability for themselves.

Minors who marry are more likely to [drop out of school](#), live in [poverty](#), experience [domestic violence](#) and sexual coercion, and suffer worse [physical](#) and [mental health](#) throughout their lifetimes. Due to their age, even emancipated minors find it difficult to access resources to leave their marriage when necessary and are unable to receive services at an adult domestic violence shelter. Even in the best of circumstances, between [70 and 80%](#) of marriages involving a minor end in divorce, showing the instability of these relationships.

Choosing when and whom to marry is one of life's most important decisions, and should be made with adult capacity and emotional maturity. The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a lifelong commitment, formed by the free and full consent of both spouses in a mutual self-gift, and that this enduring bond of love exists for the good of the spouses and the procreation and raising of children. The Church in the United States sets the age of the sacrament of marriage at the age of majority (18). Establishing the age of consent to marriage at 18 in statute would protect minors from this type of abuse and encourage young people to fully recognize the significance of entering marriage.

The Catholic Church in California is comprised of more than 12 million Catholics – and we are the largest private nonprofit provider of healthcare, education, and social services for the common good in our state. The Conference supports legislation that uplifts the vulnerable and helps families to thrive in California. For these reasons as the official public policy voice for the Catholic Church of California, we request an **"AYE" vote on AB 1267**. Should you have any questions regarding our position please contact Molly Sheahan, Associate Director for Healthy Families at 916-491-0576 or msheahan@cacatholic.org.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Buckley Domingo
Executive Director