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Chair Carney, Chair Kuhn and Distinguished Committee Members:

I submitted testimony online here yesterday and wanted to apologize for not addressing the committee properly. Following is the revised testimony. I copied and pasted a previous version by mistake. Thank you for all of your consideration.

Testimony
Barbara Adams
Age 63

I was married at the age of 16. For the sake of explaining this was not a forced marriage, I was not pregnant at the time. After many years of my own suffering, grieving and processing through my past, I am just now learning how to be an adult in the world and be accountable and responsible for myself first. To get to know myself, love myself truly and unconditionally as a person AND as a feminine.

I became a wife and mother before I became a fully recognized person in my own eyes which of course, is a vital and necessary part of "growing up". So many rights of passage I missed in my life; up until now where I can actually see myself and my part in my own life. I do not believe that the commitments of marriage is something some 16 year olds can comprehend, much less live out in healthy ways while also being equipped to be able to develop themselves into an adult. Becoming a wife or husband should be reserved for those who can decide and choose this, clearly and fully, based on understood facts and what is absolutely best for them as an individual.. not on "the feelings" of being intertwined in a "couple". Maturity is essential! Often times some of us became parents before we even knew how to finish raising ourselves to a responsible level to participate in our own lives and the lives of our loved ones and family members. Hence, some of us only survived the best we could. This all can (and in my case did) create dysfunction and failure to thrive. Please ensure a more reasonable age for marriage to ensure maturity and emotional development is intact. Our brains do not even mature until our late 20's! How can we truly know what we need? I would also like to suggest discussion for the creation of classes on the legality of marriage for everyone who is considering, no matter their age. Some young ones may only think of it as the fairy tale or happily ever after that is presented to us sometimes as girls. Thank you for reading this and considering my testimony.

Barbara Adams
Revised on March 27, 2025
5:16 pm