

Forced Marriage Laws of the U.S. States and Territories

U.S. State, Territory, or Other Holding	Statute	Relevant Language / Excerpts	Protected Population	Language Supporting Enforcement Prior to Marriage (e.g., Attempt or Intent)	Language Criminalizing Aiding, Abetting, Conspiring, or Benefitting Financially From
California	Penal Code § 265, <i>Abduction for marriage or defilement; punishment</i>	Every person who takes any woman unlawfully, against her will, and by force, menace or duress, compels her to marry him, or to marry any other person, or to be defiled, is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison.	Women	No	No
Maryland	Criminal Law § 11-303, <i>Pandering</i>	(b) A person may not knowingly take or detain another with the intent to use force, threat, coercion, or fraud to compel the other to marry the person or a third person or perform a sexual act, sexual contact, or vaginal intercourse... A person who violates subsection (b) of this section is guilty of the felony of human trafficking and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 25 years or a fine not exceeding \$15,000 or both.	Persons	Yes	<p>Yes:</p> <p>A person who knowingly benefits financially or by receiving anything of value from participation in a venture that includes an act described in subsection (b) of this section is subject to the same penalties that would apply if the person had violated that subsection.</p> <p>A person who knowingly aids, abets, or conspires with one or more other persons to violate any subsection of this section is subject to the same penalties that apply for a violation of that subsection.</p>
Minnesota	Criminal Code § 609.265, <i>Abduction</i>	Whoever, for the purpose of marriage, takes a person under the age of 18 years, without the consent of the parents, guardian, or other person having	Persons under age 18 (but, only if the minor's parents or other legal custodians do	Yes	No

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		legal custody of such person is guilty of abduction and may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than one year or to payment of a fine of not more than \$3,000, or both.	not consent to the minor's taking for purpose of marriage)		
Mississippi	Criminal Code § 97-3-1, <i>Abduction for marriage or defilement</i>	Every person who shall take any person over the age of fourteen (14) years unlawfully, against his or her will, and by force, menace, fraud, deceit, stratagem or duress, compel or induce him or her to marry such person or to marry any other person, or to be defiled, and shall be thereof duly convicted, shall be punished by imprisonment in the penitentiary not less than five (5) years and not more than fifteen (15) years.	Persons over age 14	No	No
Nevada	Criminal Code § 201.300, <i>Pandering: Definition; penalties; exception</i>	<p>1. A person who: ...<i>(e)</i> Takes or detains a person with the intent to compel the person by force, threats, menace or duress to marry him or her or any other person...is guilty of pandering.</p> <p>2. A person who is found guilty of pandering: (a) An adult: (1) If physical force or the immediate threat of physical force is used upon the adult, is guilty of a category C felony and shall be punished as provided in NRS 193.130. (2) If no physical force or immediate threat of</p>	Persons	Yes	No

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		<p>physical force is used upon the adult, is guilty of a category D felony and shall be punished as provided in NRS 193.130.</p> <p>(b) A child: (1) If physical force or the immediate threat of physical force is used upon the child, is guilty of a category B felony and shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for a minimum term of not less than 2 years and a maximum term of not more than 20 years and may be further punished by a fine of not more than \$20,000. (2) If no physical force or immediate threat of physical force is used upon the child, is guilty of a category B felony and shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for a minimum term of not less than 1 year and a maximum term of not more than 10 years and may be further punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000.</p>			
Oklahoma	Criminal Code § 1117, <i>Compelling woman to marry</i>	Any person who takes any woman against her will, and by force, menace or duress, compels her to marry him or to marry any other person, shall be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment in the State Penitentiary not	Women	No	No

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		less than ten (10) years.			
Virgin Islands	Criminal Code § 1301, <i>Forcible marriage; defilement</i>	Whoever takes any woman unlawfully, against her will, and by force, menace or duress, compels her (1) to marry him; (2) to marry any other person; or (3) to be defiled, shall be imprisoned not more than 10 years.	Women	No	No
Virginia	Criminal Code § 18.2-355, <i>Taking, detaining, etc., person for prostitution, etc., or consenting thereto</i>	Any person who: ... (2) Takes or detains a person against his or her will with the intent to compel such person, by force, threats, persuasions, menace or duress, to marry him or her or to marry any other person, or to be defiled... is guilty of pandering, and shall be guilty of a Class 4 felony.	Persons	Yes	No
Washington, D.C.	§ 22-2705, <i>Pandering; inducing or compelling an individual to engage in prostitution</i>	(a) It is unlawful for any person, within the District of Columbia to: ... (3) Take or detain an individual against the individual's will, with intent to compel such individual by force, threats, menace, or duress to marry the abductor or to marry any other person.	Individuals	Yes	No

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