

Chapter 175

(House Bill 83)

AN ACT concerning

**Family Law – ~~Emancipation of a Minor and Authorization to Marry~~  
~~Authorization for a Minor to Marry~~ Marriage of Minors**

FOR the purpose of authorizing a minor to file a petition for ~~emancipation of a minor and~~ authorization to marry in the minor’s own name subject to certain requirements; authorizing a married minor to file an action for divorce and sign contracts; extending the jurisdiction of the equity court to include a petition for ~~emancipation of a minor and~~ authorization for a minor to marry; altering the conditions under which an individual who is 17 years old is authorized to marry; prohibiting an individual under the age of 17 years from marrying; and generally relating to ~~emancipation and~~ marriage of minors.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article – Family Law  
Section 1–201(b), 2–301, 2–402(b), and 2–405(c)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY adding to  
Article – Family Law  
Section 5–2A–01 through ~~5–2A–05~~ 5–2A–06 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle  
2A. ~~Emancipation of a Minor and Authorization to Marry~~ Authorization for a  
Minor to Marry”  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Family Law**

1–201.

(b) An equity court has jurisdiction over:

(1) adoption of a child, except for a child who is under the jurisdiction of any juvenile court and who previously has been adjudicated to be a child in need of assistance;

(2) alimony;

- (3) annulment of a marriage;
- (4) divorce;
- (5) custody or guardianship of a child except for a child who is under the jurisdiction of any juvenile court and who previously has been adjudicated to be a child in need of assistance;
- (6) visitation of a child;
- (7) legitimation of a child;
- (8) paternity;
- (9) support of a child; [and]
- (10) custody or guardianship of an immigrant child pursuant to a motion for Special Immigrant Juvenile factual findings requesting a determination that the child was abused, neglected, or abandoned before the age of 18 years for purposes of § 101(a)(27)(J) of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act; **AND**

**(11) A PETITION FOR ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND~~ AUTHORIZATION FOR A MINOR TO MARRY.**

2-301.

- (a) An individual [16 or] 17 years old may not marry unless:

~~¶~~(1) **(I)** the individual has the consent of ~~a parent or guardian and the parent or guardian swears that the individual is at least 16 years old~~ **EACH LIVING PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR LEGAL CUSTODIAN OF THE INDIVIDUAL;** or

~~¶~~(2) **(II)** if the individual does not have the consent ~~of a parent or guardian~~ **REQUIRED UNDER ITEM (I) OF THIS ITEM,** either party to be married gives the clerk a certificate from a licensed physician, licensed physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner stating that the physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner has examined the woman to be married and has found that she is pregnant or has given birth to a child; **AND**

~~¶~~(2) **THE INDIVIDUAL PRESENTS A CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ORDER GRANTING ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND~~ AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE 5, SUBTITLE 2A OF THIS ARTICLE TO THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT NOT EARLIER THAN 15 DAYS AFTER THE ORDER WAS ISSUED; ~~AND~~**

~~(2) THE OTHER PARTY TO BE MARRIED IS NOT MORE THAN 4 YEARS OLDER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL.~~

(b) [An individual 15 years old may not marry unless:

(1) the individual has the consent of a parent or guardian; and

(2) either party to be married gives the clerk a certificate from a licensed physician, licensed physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner stating that the physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner has examined the woman to be married and has found that she is pregnant or has given birth to a child.

(c)] An individual under the age of [15] 17 may not marry.

2-402.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, to apply for a license, 1 of the parties to be married shall:

(1) appear before the clerk and give, under oath, the following information, which shall be placed on an application form by the clerk:

(i) the full name of each party;

(ii) the place of residence of each party;

(iii) the age of each party;

(iv) whether the parties are related by blood or marriage and, if so, in which degree of relationship;

(v) the marital status of each party; and

(vi) whether either party was married previously, and the date and place of each death or judicial determination that ended any former marriage;

(2) sign the application form; and

(3) provide the clerk with:

(I) the Social Security number of each party who has a Social Security number; AND

(II) A COPY OF AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT-ISSUED BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR OTHER OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT-ISSUED DOCUMENT OR RECORD DEMONSTRATING THE AGE OF EACH PARTY.

2-405.

~~(e) (1) If either party to be married is known to be of an age where [the parental or guardian's consent and oath, or the licensed physician's certificate] A CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ORDER GRANTING EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND AUTHORIZATION FOR A MINOR TO MARRY, required by § 2-301 of this title, is required, the clerk shall [obtain the consent and oath or the certificate] REVIEW THE CERTIFIED COPY OF THE ORDER before issuing the license.~~

~~(2) (i) The clerk's record required under this title shall include:~~

~~1. the consent and oath required by § 2-301 of this title, if written; or~~

~~2. the fact that consent was given and an oath was made, if given and made in person.~~

~~(ii) The licensed physician's certificate required by § 2-301 of this title may not be made a part of the clerk's record.] A PHOTOCOPY OF THE CERTIFIED COPY OF THE ORDER GRANTING EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND AUTHORIZATION FOR A MINOR TO MARRY REQUIRED UNDER § 2-301 OF THIS TITLE.~~

~~(3) After an individual has been issued a license in accordance with the provisions of this subtitle, the clerk who issued the license shall seal the licensed physician's certificate. Except on order of the court, the licensed physician's certificate shall remain sealed.]~~

*(c) (1) If either party to be married is known to be [of an age where the parental or guardian's consent and oath, or the licensed physician's certificate, required by § 2-301 of this title, is required,] 17 YEARS OLD, BEFORE ISSUING THE LICENSE, the clerk shall obtain the REQUIRED consent [and oath] or the LICENSED PHYSICIAN'S certificate AND THE CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ORDER GRANTING AUTHORIZATION FOR A MINOR TO MARRY before issuing the license.*

*(2) (i) The clerk's record required under this title shall include:*

*1. A. the consent [and oath] required by § 2-301 of this title, if written; or*

*[2.] B. the fact that consent was given [and an oath was made], if given and made in person; AND*

**2. A PHOTOCOPY OF THE CERTIFIED COPY OF THE ORDER GRANTING AUTHORIZATION FOR A MINOR TO MARRY REQUIRED UNDER § 2-301 OF THIS TITLE.**

*(ii) The licensed physician’s certificate required by § 2-301 of this title may not be made a part of the clerk’s record.*

*(3) After an individual has been issued a license in accordance with the provisions of this subtitle, the clerk who issued the license shall seal the licensed physician’s certificate. Except on order of the court, the licensed physician’s certificate shall remain sealed.*

**SUBTITLE 2A. ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY~~  
AUTHORIZATION FOR A MINOR TO MARRY.**

**5-2A-01.**

**(A) A MINOR WHO IS 17 YEARS OLD MAY FILE A PETITION IN THE MINOR’S OWN NAME FOR ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY~~ IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE MINOR RESIDES.**

**(B) A PETITION FOR ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY~~ SHALL CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING:**

**(1) THE PETITIONER’S FULL NAME, GENDER, DATE OF BIRTH, AND ADDRESS, INCLUDING THE LENGTH OF TIME THE PETITIONER HAS RESIDED AT THE ADDRESS;**

**(2) THE INTENDED SPOUSE’S FULL NAME, GENDER, DATE OF BIRTH, AND ADDRESS, INCLUDING THE LENGTH OF TIME THE INTENDED SPOUSE HAS RESIDED AT THE ADDRESS;**

**(3) A STATEMENT EXPLAINING HOW THE PARTIES MET AND HOW LONG THEY HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER;**

**(4) A COPY OF ANY CRIMINAL RECORDS CONCERNING EITHER PARTY AND A COPY OF ANY PEACE ORDER OR PROTECTIVE ORDER ISSUED AGAINST EITHER PARTY; ~~AND~~**

**(5) EVIDENCE THAT THE MINOR IS MATURE AND CAPABLE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SELF-SUPPORT INDEPENDENT OF THE MINOR’S PARENTS, GUARDIAN, LEGAL CUSTODIAN, OR INTENDED SPOUSE; AND**

**(6) THE NAME AND LAST KNOWN ADDRESS OF EACH LIVING PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR LEGAL CUSTODIAN OF THE PETITIONER.**

**5-2A-02.**

**ON THE FILING OF A PETITION FOR ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND~~ AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY, A COURT SHALL:**

**(1) APPOINT A LAWYER WITH FAMILY LAW EXPERIENCE TO REPRESENT THE PETITIONER;**

**(2) SET AN EVIDENTIARY HEARING ON THE PETITION; ~~AND~~**

**(3) PROVIDE THE MINOR WITH THE FOLLOWING:**

**(I) INFORMATION ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ~~AN EMANCIPATED MINOR AND;~~**

**1. A MINOR GRANTED AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO DIVORCE ~~AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS;~~ AND**

**2. PARTIES TO A MARRIAGE;**

**(II) REFERRAL INFORMATION FOR LEGAL AID AGENCIES; ~~AND~~**

**(III) INFORMATION ON STATE AND NATIONAL HOTLINES FOR CHILD ABUSE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING; AND**

**(IV) INFORMATION RELATED TO IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE UNITED STATES; AND**

**(4) NOTIFY EACH LIVING PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR LEGAL CUSTODIAN WHOM THE COURT IS ABLE TO LOCATE OF THEIR RIGHT TO SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE PETITION.**

**5-2A-03.**

**(A) AT THE HEARING, THE COURT SHALL CONDUCT AN IN CAMERA INTERVIEW OF THE PETITIONER SEPARATE FROM THE PETITIONER'S PARENTS ~~OR,~~ GUARDIANS, OR LEGAL CUSTODIANS AND INTENDED SPOUSE.**

(B) (1) NEITHER THE WISHES OF THE PARENTS ~~OR, LEGAL~~ GUARDIANS, OR LEGAL CUSTODIANS OF THE PETITIONER NOR THE FACT THAT THE PETITIONER OR THE INTENDED SPOUSE OF THE PETITIONER IS PREGNANT IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO DETERMINE THAT MARRIAGE IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PETITIONER.

(2) THERE IS A REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTION THAT ~~EMANCIPATION AND MARRIAGE ARE~~ IS NOT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE PETITIONER IF ALL THE PARENTS ~~OR, GUARDIANS, OR LEGAL CUSTODIANS~~ OF THE PETITIONER OPPOSE THE PETITION.

(C) SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION, AFTER A HEARING, A COURT MAY ISSUE AN ORDER GRANTING ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND~~ AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY IF THE COURT MAKES WRITTEN FINDINGS THAT:

(1) THE PETITIONER IS ~~A COUNTY RESIDENT WHO IS~~ AT LEAST 17 YEARS OLD;

(2) ~~THE INTENDED SPOUSE OF THE PETITIONER IS NOT MORE THAN 4 YEARS OLDER THAN THE PETITIONER;~~

~~(3)~~ (3) THE PETITIONER SEEKS TO MARRY VOLUNTARILY AND FREE FROM FORCE, COERCION, AND FRAUD; AND

~~(4)~~ (3) THE PETITIONER IS MATURE AND CAPABLE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SELF-SUPPORT.

(D) A COURT MAY DENY A PETITION FOR THE ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND~~ AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY IF THE COURT MAKES A WRITTEN FINDING THAT ~~EMANCIPATION AND~~ MARRIAGE ~~ARE~~ IS NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PETITIONER.

(E) A COURT MAY NOT ISSUE AN ORDER GRANTING ~~EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND~~ AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY UNDER THIS SECTION IF THE COURT DETERMINES THAT:

(1) THE INTENDED SPOUSE OF THE PETITIONER:

(I) AT ANY TIME HAS BEEN IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY OVER THE PETITIONER OR IN A POSITION OF SPECIAL TRUST WITH THE PETITIONER OR HAS HAD A PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PETITIONER; OR

(II) HAS BEEN CONVICTED OR ADJUDICATED DELINQUENT FOR:

1. ANY CRIME AGAINST A MINOR;
2. A CRIME OF VIOLENCE UNDER § 14-101 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE;
3. A SEXUAL CRIME UNDER TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 3 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE; OR
4. HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNDER TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 11 OF THE CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE;

(2) ONE PARTY IS PREGNANT OR HAS A CHILD WITH THE OTHER PARTY THAT EVIDENCES THAT THE PETITIONER WAS THE VICTIM OF A SEXUAL CRIME COMMITTED BY THE INTENDED SPOUSE; OR

(3) A PROTECTIVE ORDER OR PEACE ORDER WAS ISSUED AGAINST THE INTENDED SPOUSE OF THE PETITIONER, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE PETITIONER WAS THE PERSON TO BE PROTECTED.

5-2A-04.

~~(A) ON THE ISSUANCE OF AN ORDER GRANTING EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY, THE CLERK OF THE COURT SHALL PROVIDE A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE ORDER TO THE PETITIONER.~~

~~(B) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, AN ORDER OF EMANCIPATION SHALL HAVE THE SAME EFFECT AS THE PETITIONER REACHING THE AGE OF MAJORITY AND SHALL CONFER ON THE PETITIONER ALL OF THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEGAL ADULTHOOD.~~

~~(2) AN ORDER OF EMANCIPATION DOES NOT SUPERSEDE AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR:~~

~~(I) VOTING;~~

~~(II) THE PURCHASE, POSSESSION, OR CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES;~~

~~(III) THE PURCHASE, POSSESSION, OR CONSUMPTION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS OR ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES;~~

~~(IV) COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE; OR~~

~~(v) HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS INCLUDING  
WORKPLACE REGULATIONS DESIGNED TO PROTECT INDIVIDUALS UNDER THE AGE  
OF 18 YEARS.~~

~~5-2A-05.~~

~~A MINOR WHO IS MARRIED MAY FILE AN ACTION FOR DIVORCE UNDER TITLE  
7 OF THIS ARTICLE AND SIGN AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS.~~

A MINOR WHO IS MARRIED:

(1) MAY FILE AN ACTION FOR DIVORCE UNDER TITLE 7 OF THIS  
ARTICLE; AND

(2) SHALL BE DEEMED EMANCIPATED FOR THE LIMITED PURPOSE OF  
OBTAINING A DIVORCE.

~~5-2A-05.~~ 5-2A-06.

THE COURT OF APPEALS MAY ADOPT RULES TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS  
OF THIS SUBTITLE.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
October 1, 2022.

Approved by the Governor, April 21, 2022.