

# U.S. Sen. Johnson: Statement on International Women's Day 2019

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, released the following statement to mark International Women's Day 2019:

"International Women's Day should be a reminder that America needs to lead by example to empower and inspire women around the globe," said Sen. Johnson. "My committee's investigation and report on the use of fiancé and spousal visas to facilitate child marriage and human trafficking has highlighted these problems and will hopefully result in passage of legislation to help prevent this abuse in the future."

Earlier this year the committee released a majority staff report titled "[How the U.S. Immigration System Encourages Child Marriages](#)" that included the following findings:

- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approved immigration petitions for 8,686 spouses and fiancés in marriages involving minors from FY2007 to FY2017. In 95 percent of the cases, the younger person was a girl.
- USCIS awarded petitions to people with significant age differences, including a 71-year-old U.S. citizen's petition for a 17-year-old spouse from Guatemala and a 14-year-old's petition for a 48-year-old spouse from Jamaica.
- USCIS approved 149 petitions involving a minor with an adult spouse or fiancé who was more than 40 years old.
- USCIS awarded green cards to 4,749 minors in the United States on spousal or fiancé visas, allowing them to adjust status to become lawful permanent

residents from FY2007 to FY2017.

Presently, under the Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”), a U.S. child may petition for a visa for a spouse or fiancé living in another country, and a U.S. adult may petition for a visa for a minor spouse or fiancé living abroad. The committee’s recent report found that from 2007 to 2017 there were more than 5,500 cases of adults petitioning for a spouse or fiancé visa for a minor, and nearly 3,000 cases of a minor petitioning for a spouse or fiancé visa for an adult.