



CONTROVERSIAL BILLS AUTHORED BY SENATOR WAHAB

A Report on 4 bills that outraged California for safety concerns, divisive agenda and anti worker sentiment - SB 573, SB 404, SB 403, and SB 460

Controversial Bills Authored by Senator Wahab

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Senator Wahab's Disastrous Bills

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SB404

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Anti Staffers Bill

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No response to the tragic shooting death of two young children on I- 880

No plan to curb rampant widespread sideshows and street racing involving numerous vehicles

No investigation into Vehicle fires in Oakland, CA, and other cities

Consistently Failed to Meet Constituents when they most needed it

Authored unpopular and unsafe bills such as SB403, SB404, SB460 and SB573

Introduction

Aisha Wahab is an American politician who has been a member of the California State Senate from the 10th district since 2022. She ran a close race against fellow Democrat Lily Mei and was trailing until her team built a highly negative campaign targeting Lily Mei leading to a win by about 15000 plus votes. Today, however, those who voted for Wahab are highly critical of her bills that are not just distracting from real issues but also harmful for California. State senator Aisha Wahab has irked Californians and emerged as a newbie political leader who appears to be working on an agenda far removed from the welfare of her constituents, or worse still is authoring badly drafted bills that may inflict long term harm to the citizens of California for generations to come.

Our investigation finds that her unpopularity is only growing as seen in the pushback against four recent bills introduced by her. Besides bad bills, Senator Wahab has been called out in the past for her negligence in her role as chairperson of the Public Safety Commission.

Some of these examples include,

- No response to the Tragic shooting death of two young children on I-880
- No plan to curb rampant widespread sideshows and street racing involving numerous vehicles.
- No investigation into Vehicle fires in Oakland, CA, and other cities
- Consistently Failed to Meet Constituents when they most needed it
- Authored unpopular and unsafe bills such as [SB403](#) (vetoed), [SB404](#) (referred to appropriations), [SB460](#) (stalled by author in March 2023) and [SB573](#) (stalled in Senate)

After her authorship of the controversial caste bill SB403 faced tremendous opposition from the Indian American, Sikh, and Hindu voices, the campaign to RECALL WAHAB has picked up steam. It has momentum because Senator Wahab has been associated with other disastrous and unpopular bills and because she has failed to effectively represent her constituents.

The recall is spearheaded by a coalition of individuals from various backgrounds and ethnicities, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Latino, Indian, and Afghan supporters. Interestingly, the core group leading the recall effort consists of Fremont residents who had initially supported

Aisha Wahab during her election. The recall is based on her “nonperformance” on the job. Senator Wahab, as the chair of the Public Safety Commission in the California Senate, has displayed a concerning lack of action in response to escalating crime rates. She has shown zero remorse for the safety breaches and spate of vandalisms at Hindu temples in California including in her own district. Her callous lack of responsiveness, and conspicuous absence of remorse and lack of accountability are evidenced of her failure to respond to the significant threats that pose a serious risk to the safety of her constituents. Despite the repeated requests and urgency of situation, Senator Wahab has not taken any meaningful steps to address these issues or provide a response to concerns raised by the public.

SB 573, a Stranglehold on Legislative Staff and Their Careers, Draws Ire

During the hearing for SB 573, Wahab drew ire from “We Said Enough”, a nonprofit founded in 2017 to speak out against workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying in professional and academic settings. The group said the bill could force legislative staffers to stay stuck in toxic work environment.

SB 573, a Stranglehold on Legislative Staff and Their Careers, Draws Ire

California State Senator Aisha Wahab is in the news lately for all the wrong reasons. First, she introduced [SB 573](#), a bill that would bar legislative staff from becoming lobbyists within a year of leaving the Capitol. During the hearing for SB 573, Wahab drew ire from We Said Enough, a nonprofit founded in 2017 to speak out against workplace sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying in professional and academic settings. The group said the bill could force legislative staffers to stay stuck in toxic work environments, or limit future opportunities. They said the measure could trap lower paid staff in “hostile or abusive workplaces by preventing them from holding meaningful, well-compensated employment elsewhere.”

Wahab took issue with Samantha Corbin and Alicia Benavidez, the two lobbyists who founded the group, for “using victims as a prop to not have lobbying reform in the state of California.” As her comments made the rounds on Twitter, Sacramento lobbyists, staffers, and legislators responded with outrage and frustration. Corbin and Benavidez tweeted from the We Said Enough Twitter account that they were “exploring legal options.” Assemblywoman Tina McKinner (D-Los Angeles), called on Wahab to apologize. Wahab tabled SB 573 but has not apologized. Outrage about those specific comments resulted in other critiques of Wahab — more specifically, greasing the gossip wheels about her reputation *as a difficult boss, fueled in part by the abrupt departure of her chief-of-staff*. “If you know anyone in the building you already know Wahab’s history of terrorizing staff,” one former Capitol staffer Tweeted that same day.



Tweet



Maya Polon
@MayaPolon



Also if you know anyone in the building you already know Wahab’s history of terrorizing staff but truly shame on every single member of the committee who let even a scaled back version of this bill out of committee

11:26 AM · Apr 19, 2023 · 4,481 Views

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**SB 403: A FAILED BUT DANGEROUS
ATTEMPT TO ADD A LOOSELY DEFINED
TERM “CASTE” TO MAKE CIVIL RIGHTS
ACT DISCRIMINATORY**

We know only too well how Wahab was adamant about adding ‘caste’ to the Civil Rights Act, despite stiff opposition. She is seen colluding with special interest groups like Equality Labs and Anti-India forces to bring a divisive bill that inserts caste into US lexicon, discriminating against her largest constituent base of Indian Americans in Fremont district. Not only that, without proof, she labeled Hindu Americans as casteist responsible for caste-based violence and rapes and murders in California. This is dangerous and shows a

vested interest, hateful agenda and deep-seated prejudice against her key constituents.

SB 403, Attempt to Target Indian Americans with a Hateful Colonial Caste Trope, Meets Severe Resistance from her Constituents – the Bill DIES with the Governor VETO.

Wahab's authorship of [SB 403](#) that proposes to add caste as a protected category has seen the highest pushback in the history of California bills and yet she has been unrelenting in pushing for the divisive hateful and anti Indian American bill trying to add Caste to the Civil Rights Act, stereotyping Hindu Americans. This bill has been vetoed by Governor Newsom, after months of rancour and expensive waste of taxpayers money. Given the open hateful agenda of this bill, it has further eroded Wahab's credibility and authenticity. SB 403 upset many South Asian community members as they consider it insulting, unnecessary and as the word "caste" stereotypes, and denigrates them based on their racial or ethnic identity.

This bill that would lead to racial profiling because it legislates false claims based on national origin, ethnicity, and ancestry of South Asians

Wahab continues to gaslight Indian Americans who are concerned about the addition of "Caste" as a misleading stereotype, saying caste exists across different communities. She refuses to acknowledge that every community has fought caste identification including the N word or other denigrating terms.

Wahab does not acknowledge the anomalies of the Cisco case and how the defendants were profiled and instead quotes large support from Indian Americans. As has been noted through her tweets and close interaction with a for profit, special interest hate group Equality

Labs, she has close ties with anti-India and anti-Hindu groups including Khalistan is (while most Sikhs oppose the bill, many pro SB403 Sikhs are also found supporting Khalistan rallies). Senator Wahab has made blanket statements calling South Asians as using caste to perpetrate horrible criminal conduct including oppression, human trafficking and rape, despite zero evidence of legal or police complaints to justify such targeting of Asian Americans. Flipping between Caste



as South Asian and regional issues, eventually she has called it a universal system that perpetrates across regions. She has refused to give legitimacy to Hindu voices and their concern that Caste is taught in California schools as part of Hindu systems. In private meetings, some

political leaders have expressed their “perplexing” insistence on the term “Caste” and refusal to replace with more facially neutral terms like “Socially inherited status” and a bill that is at best superfluous “clarifying existing law” She has refused to listen to demands for more studies before pushing for SB403.



Those opposed to the bill point to same actors supporting SB403 a divisive anti India bill and those supporting separatist movements like Khalistan. Thankfully the bill SB403 has met the

Governor's veto and has died out, but not without triggering a Recall Wahab campaign to put an end to her high-handed attitudes.

SB 460 BAN THE BOX: ELIMINATE BACKGROUND CHECKS IN HOUSING

It seems like a dangerous idea where houses in the neighborhood can be let and rented to people with criminal. backgrounds as Landlords would have to show compliance especially fair housing providers. This bill met with severe resistance and was tabled.

SB 460: Pro Criminals Housing Bill?

A bill that outraged realtors and residents of Wahab's district, [SB460](#) was authored by Wahab as a bill that would prohibit a housing provider from inquiring about applicants' criminal history. Ban the box resurfaced with Wahab's new bill that would prohibit the landlord from making any decision based on criminal history of the applicant. As such, the landlord could be sued for discrimination if he / she refused to let due to a criminal record. Given that the two key criteria for assessing a tenant are criminal history and credit scores, Wahab's bill seemed like a way to encourage crime in safe neighborhoods and met with huge resistance.

This bill would make landlords and fair housing providers vulnerable to injunctions and paying damages if they refused someone housing for their criminal record. The Fair Chance Housing Act would consider it offensive and prohibit the housing provider from:

- Inquiring about an applicant's criminal history.
- Requiring an applicant to disclose their criminal history.
- Requiring an applicant to authorize the release of their criminal history.

As stated in the bill "it would require affordable housing providers to annually submit a certificate of compliance ...to the CRD Civil Rights Department." It would expand the definition of what constitutes a crime and would require affordable housing providers to be held beholden to the CRD and its definitions of crime instead of relying on the current law and constitution. As such this bill entrusts the CRD with more authority than a CRD should exercise and again builds a litigious and harmful trend, making neighborhoods unsafe.

The bill would authorize a court to award punitive damages if it is proven by clear and convincing evidence that a violation of this section was committed with oppression, fraud, or malice.

Expands authority of the CRD to define crime and increase paperwork for landlords submitting a certificate of compliance to the CRD regarding how they helped house people with criminal track records. The bill would "authorize the department to impose a civil penalty for failure to comply with this provision" thus mandating and encouraging affordable housing to house residents with criminal track records.

SB 404
CHILD MARRIAGE BAN BILL IS
NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

While a child marriage ban bill is needed in California, in the current form, SB 404 only applies punitive damages to sexual offenders, even sanctioning child marriage, pedophilia and exploitation of minor girls. It has been criticized by many as a back door entry to foreign child brides and in that case needs to be opposed vehemently as it continues to forge ahead in the assembly.

Does SB 404 really protect minors from child marriage and exploitation?

As if all this were not enough, Senator Wahab's Bill [SB 404](#) appears to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. This Bill deceptively claims to protect minors from child marriages, but the

reality is that it attempts to make child marriage legal in California by getting a court order and letting offenders scot-free with minimal punitive action.

There are legitimate concerns that this bill can encourage child abuse and rape in California. SB 404 was originally introduced to end all marriages under the age of 18, without exception. This would have been in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 5, to end the abuse of child marriage before 2030. It would have also led the charge along with eight other states in the United States that have ended marriage before the age of 18, without exceptions.

Most people are unaware that state laws govern marriage age laws and 46 out of 50 states allow children under the age of 18 to marry parental consent, or if there is a pregnancy involved. Over 85% of these child marriages involve minor girls getting married to older men.

There are legal experts who say that SB 404 as amended will no longer protect minors from the abuse of forced child marriage and instead it will continue to allow them to be exposed to numerous harms and abuses under the protection of the law. AHA Foundation has included a story and protest petition regarding SB404. The testimonials and letter by [Sara Tasneem](#) is included at the end of this section.

Minors of any age may be married under the existing law with parental consent and judicial review. However, in cases of forced child marriages, minors are exposed to coaching and abuse to easily get around age of consent laws. This creates a trap for the minor especially when there is sexual abuse happening. SB404 in its current form will do nothing to stop the legal marriage of minors to adults. It will only serve to criminalize a small population which will further stigmatize this issue. Abusers in these cases may simply legally marry their victims which would stop any criminal charges from occurring and would leave minors in a legal trap.

Section 1 of the bill (see below) excuses pedophilia with punitive damages and even has sanctions to legalize or solemnize it using court orders.

1 SECTION 1. Section 289.1 is added to the Penal Code, to read:
2 289.1. (a) ~~Any person~~ *Subject to subdivision (b), any person,*
3 *18 years of age or older, who knowingly and willfully sanctions*
4 ~~or arranges a religious union, or other secular nonlegally recognized~~
5 ~~or solemnizes a marriage or domestic partnership, partnership~~
6 *between a minor and another person is guilty of a misdemeanor*
7 *and shall be punished by a fine of not less than five thousand*
8 ~~dollars (\$5,000) and more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or~~
9 *by imprisonment in a county jail for up to one year per incident.*
10 (b) This section does not apply to a marriage or domestic
11 partnership entered into after receiving a court order pursuant to
12 Section 297.1 or ~~304~~ 302 of the Family Code.
13 (c) *For the purposes of this section, “solemnize” has the same*
14 *meaning as described in Section 400 of the Family Code*

SB 404 will not serve to protect minors from entering what most would consider the biggest contract of their lives. If minors do not have the ability to consent to sex, vote, or even buy a pack of cigarettes, they should not have the ability into a marriage contract where consent is questionable and easily coerced. There are cases where minors enter successful marriages, but those cases are the minority. The overwhelming majority of underage marriages (70 to 80 percent) end up in divorce. SB 404 will not prevent the abuse of forced child marriage. Instead, it will serve as an empty symbolic gesture that will not address the many harms that minors face when forced into marriage and continue to face when trying to exit those marriages.

Senator Wahab, of all people, being of Afghan origin, should understand the implications of child marriage and subsequent abuse. Bacha bazi is a custom that has been around Afghan tradition for centuries. However, over time, due to poverty and innumerable tragedies that have infiltrated the society of the region, this tradition got distorted to an extent that is now directly violating human and children’s rights. The distorted subculture of Afghan pedophilia now represents one of the most horrifying violations of human rights in the world. Bacha Bazi or dancing boys (from Persian: bacha— “boy”, and bazi— “play, game”) is an expression used in

certain parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It continues in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where this tradition has been on the rise over the past 20 years, especially in Pashtun regions in the south and east, and in the north, including among ethnic Tajiks. Senator Wahab, instead of addressing this grave human rights issue, appears to be building a back door for pedophilia in California.

Underage marriage affects all religions and backgrounds, and it thrives in the United States because many states, including California, have exceptions written into their marriage laws for minors to be married with parental consent, mainly to support exceptions such as teen pregnancies. These laws disproportionately affect girls. According to a Pew Research Report, “approximately 5.5 in 1000 minors (girls) are married in California, compared to 4.6 in 1000 in the US overall.” Based on the American Community Survey findings, “between 2010 and 2014, 6.8 in every 1000 15–17-year-olds were married in CA.” California is ranked sixth in the nation per capita of 15-to-17-year-old marriages.

Ending child marriage in the United States is an uphill battle because each state must approve new bills limiting the age of marriage to 18. Many states, including California, are reticent to pass such bills because of age-old patriarchal views of marriage and pregnancy. Recently, Delaware and New Jersey passed amended marriage laws to limit the age of marriage to 18 with no exceptions. Only Delaware, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania have extended age limits to 18 in the United States and that means minor girls are subject to vulnerable situations in other states as seen in the testimony (below) of Sara Tasneem from California, who suffered marital rape as a minor.

❖ **Testimony from survivor and CA resident who opposes SB-404 (reproduced)**

I am a child marriage survivor who is advocating to end child marriage in California. At just fifteen, I was forced by my father to marry a 28-year-old stranger. The religious group my dad was a part of coerced girls to get married at young ages. The youngest girl I knew who was forced into marriage was 14. She was forced to marry after being raped. Typically, a younger (virgin) girl was wed to an older man. This group was not in another country, they were based in the Bay Area.

I was such a minor. I was forced into a marriage by my father at the age of fifteen to a 28-year-old man. We were married in a spiritual marriage in California and then I was taken out of the country, raped daily. We returned to the Bay Area when I was six months pregnant (clear

evidence of statutory rape). My mother did not know I was being abused or forced into a marriage and had she known she would have charged statutory rape and kidnapping on my abusers. I was legally married then at the age of 16, and pregnant to my rapist in Reno, Nevada. That marriage was recognized by California where we lived at the time. That legal marriage allowed my abusers to escape any legal intervention or criminal charges.

Sadly, I am not alone, a recent report showed that: "Between 2000 and 2015, at least 207,459 minors were married in the United States", and **86% of child marriages happen to girls marrying adult men**. Many Americans are unaware that children across the United States are legally able to marry. State laws govern marriage age laws and 46 out of 50 states allow children under the age of 18 to marry parental consent, or if there is a pregnancy involved.

Marriage should be a partnership, entered willfully by both parties. My marriage was a far cry from that. I was still a teenager with hopes and dreams before I was forced to marry. When I was 15, I dreamed of being an attorney. Instead of pursuing an education, I found myself in a relationship where I was being controlled physically, mentally, and financially. In our group, women were meant to serve and bear children. Having a career was out of the question and thinking about a future beyond marriage and motherhood was highly discouraged.

I was desperate, however, to have a future beyond being a mother and wife and so I found my strength in fighting for my education. Against the wishes of the group, I started taking classes at City College of San Francisco. I took public transit each day to attend my classes. When I finally obtained my culinary degree from CCSF, I got a job and my own car. I felt empowered enough to leave my unhappy marriage. It took me all of eight long years to finally leave. I was 23.

Why are the laws in the state of California not doing more to protect minors? The underage exceptions written into California's marriage laws must be done away with completely to prevent parental coercion and sexual abuse of minors.

I am fighting to change laws that allow child marriage in the United States along with other survivors who know all too well about the human rights abuse that is FORCED CHILD MARRIAGE.

My experience highlights the need for legally ending minor marriage before the age of 18 to prevent this harm from occurring to more minors. I am not the only victim of forced child marriage. After escaping my marriage at 23, I pursued my education and have connected with

many other survivors of forced child marriage, many of whom grew up here in California and who have stood up against the abuse of forced child marriage.

In my case and most others, minors are not able to easily escape their marriages because of their age and the power dynamics that exist in an adult/child sexual relationship. I ask for all those who have the power to change this, to look more deeply at this issue and do what is right and end this abuse from happening at all.

SB404 as amended will not prevent the abuse of forced child marriage. Instead, it will serve as an empty symbolic gesture that will not address the many harms that minors face when forced into marriage and continue to face when trying to exit those marriages.

I hope to see SB 404 amended or re-introduced next session in a form that will reintroduce the original approach of ending child marriage under the age 18.

- Name: Sara Tasneem (Survivor/Advocate, California Resident)
- Comments on SB-404: <https://legiscan.com/CA/bill/SB404/2023>
- https://www.facebook.com/thrivingaftersurviving?ref=embed_comment
- Blog: <https://tasneemsfadvocacy.home.blog/>
- Petition:
<https://www.change.org/p/california-state-senate-end-child-marriage-incalifornia?signed=true>
- News Article:
<https://www.dailycal.org/2017/05/30/child-marriage-laws-ca-actloopholes-allow-statutory-rape>
- <https://www.theahafoundation.org/saras-story-part-1-survivor-of-child-marriage-in-the-us-on-her-ordeal-and-how-she-won-her-freedom-being-married-to-an-older-man-was-like-being-a-prisoner-i-didnt-even-have-control-over-my-own-body/>

On AHA Foundation's blog Sara Tasneem writes about her story"

A Survivor of Child Marriage in the U.S. On Her Ordeal and How She Won Her

Freedom: "Being married to an older man was like being a prisoner. I didn't

even have control over my own body.”

[VISIT SARA'S WEBSITE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HER ADVOCACY](#)

Resources

The above-mentioned bills by Senator Aisha Wahab can be read and referred to using the following links:

1. [Senate Bill 573](#)
2. [Senate Bill 403](#)
3. [Senate Bill 460](#)
4. [Senate Bill 404](#)

For Questions regarding this eBook, please contact us at sarascareusa@gmail.com