

## China Proposes Law to Make Marriage Easier, Divorce Harder



China's government has proposed a new law that would make it easier to register marriages, but more difficult to get a divorce.

China's Ministry of Civil Affairs recently released a new version of the law. The ministry said people will be able to provide their opinions on the proposal through September 11.

The agency said the proposed measure aims to help build a "family friendly society" in the country. The new law is being presented as Chinese officials struggle to find ways to get young couples to marry and have children.

Official government records showed China's population decreased during the past two years. The population dropped by 2.08 million last year, and decreased by 850,000 in 2022.

The proposed law would establish a 30-day “cooling off” period in case either party has second thoughts about a divorce. This would permit individuals to withdraw official divorce requests during this period if they change their minds.

The proposed law drew wide attention on social media, Reuters news agency reported. One user of the country’s Weibo social media service wrote, "It's easy to get married, but hard to divorce, What a stupid rule." The statement drew tens of thousands of likes from other users.

The proposed change aims to promote "the importance of marriage and family," said Jiang Quanbao. He is a professor at the Institute for Population and Development Studies at Jiaotong University in Xi'an. Jiang spoke to the state-backed Global Times newspaper.

The measure is also meant to “reduce impulsive divorces,” Jiang added. He said it also aims to support social systems and better protect the rights of the parties involved.

Official data showed the number of Chinese couples who married in the first half of 2024 fell by 498,000 compared to a year earlier. It marked the lowest marriage numbers since 2013.

In China, marriage is generally considered a requirement for having children because of widespread government policies covering families. One policy, for example, requires parents to present proof of marriage before they can register a baby and receive government assistance.

Many young Chinese are choosing to stay single or put off getting married because of worries over job security and other economic concerns.