



SAFE ACT (H.R. 3317) Sample Support Letter

Sample Subject:

Increase the Penalty for FGM in the United States: Pass the SAFE Act (H.R. 3317)

Sample Text:

I am writing to urge you to pass the Stopping Abusive Female Exploitation (SAFE) Act, or H.R. 3317. This bill sends an important message that female genital mutilation is a serious crime and will not be tolerated in the United States. Increasing the penalty for FGM from five to 15 years will serve as a serious deterrent and will also further solidify the U.S. stance against FGM.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is any procedure involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs and is often performed on girls between the ages of 4 and 14 to ensure their virginity until marriage. This dangerous procedure has no health benefits and has lifelong health and psychological consequences. Immediately following the procedure, girls are at risk for severe pain, shock, bleeding, bacterial infection, and injury to nearby tissue. In the long term, girls and women who have suffered this procedure are at risk for recurrent bladder and urinary tract infections, cysts, infertility, and complications during intercourse and childbirth.

The threat of female genital mutilation is a reality for a significant number of girls in the United States. While many think of this as a custom that only occurs in foreign countries, research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found in 2016 that approximately 513,000 women and girls in the U.S. had either been subjected to female genital mutilation or were at risk.

While it is already illegal in the United States on the federal level, a punishment of only five years does not reflect the gravity of the crime. A stronger federal punishment will ensure that little girls in the United States are better protected.

I therefore urge you to pass H.R. 3317 and impose appropriate punishment on those who violate the human rights of girls in this way.