



Massachusetts FGM Legislation Sample Support Letter

Sample Subject: Prohibit Female Genital Mutilation: Co-sponsor An Act to Protect Girls from Genital Mutilation

Sample Text:

I am writing to urge you co-sponsor An Act to Protect Girls From Genital Mutilation (HD849 and SD617 filed by Representatives Jay Livingstone and Natalie Higgins and Senator Joe Boncore). This bill sends an important message that female genital mutilation (FGM) is a serious crime and will not be tolerated in Massachusetts.

Female genital mutilation 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 FGM 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. In Massachusetts alone, 14,211 women and girls are at risk, making it among the top states with those at risk who are not protected by state legislation.

Enacting such a law in Massachusetts would have a significant deterrent effect and would send a strong message that this conduct is not acceptable in the state. I strongly urge you to support this legislation and take the necessary steps to move it forward in your leadership capacity as we can no longer rely on the existence of the federal law. The federal law was struck down recently as exceeding Congress' authority under the Commerce and the Necessary and Proper clauses of the U.S. Constitution. Only 28 states have laws, with your help we can make Massachusetts number 29.

I therefore urge you to co-sponsor HD849 or SD617.



Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,