



Washington, D.C. FGM Legislation Sample Support Letter

Sample Subject: Prohibit Female Genital Mutilation: Support B23-0339

Sample Text:

I am writing you to urge your support of the Female Genital Mutilation Prohibition Act of 2019 (B23-0339), introduced by councilmember Mary Cheh. This bill sends an important message that female genital mutilation is a serious crime and will not be tolerated in Washington, D.C.

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 four and fourteen 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 substantial number of girls in the U.S. While many believe this is a custom that only occurs in foreign countries, research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that approximately 513,000 women and girls in the U.S. have either been subjected to FGM or were at risk. In the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria metropolitan statistical area, an estimated 51,411 women and girls are at risk, making it among the top metropolitan areas with those at risk.

Enacting such a law in Washington, D.C. would have a significant deterrent effect and would send a strong message that this conduct is not acceptable in the capital. 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 protections at the federal level. In late 2018, the federal anti-FGM law was struck down as exceeding congressional authority under the Commerce Clause and the Necessary and Proper Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Only 35 states have FGM bans, with your help Washington, D.C. can join them.



I therefore urge you to support the Female Genital Mutilation Prohibition Act of 2019 (B23-0339).

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,