



Massachusetts FGM Legislation Sample Support Letter

Sample Subject: Prohibit Female Genital Mutilation: Support Bills S.834 and H.3332

Sample Text:

I am writing to urge you co-sponsor or support An Act Relative to Female Genital Mutilation (S.834) and An Act Relative to the Penalties for the Crime of Female Genital Mutilation (H.3332), introduced by Senator Joe Boncore and Representatives Jay Livingstone and Natalie Higgins, respectively. These bills send an important message that female genital mutilation is a serious crime and will not be tolerated in Massachusetts.

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 Massachusetts alone, an estimated 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 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 laws, with your help we can make Massachusetts number 36.



I therefore urge you to support or cosponsor S.834 and H.3332.



Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,