

**STOP FGM Act of 2020 Support Letter****Sample Subject:** Clarify and Affirm the Federal FGM Ban**Sample Text:**

I am writing to urge you to support the STOP FGM Act of 2020 (H.R. 6100), introduced by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee. This bill clarifies the commercial nature of female genital mutilation (FGM) and the authority given to Congress under the Commerce Clause to ban this human rights abuse. Further, this bill includes a comprehensive definition of FGM, an appropriate penalty for committing FGM on a minor, and provides for reporting on recorded incidences of FGM and actions taken by Federal agencies to educate and assist communities and stakeholders about 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 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. FGM is not required by any major religion and predates all major religions.

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.

The STOP Act provides a comprehensive, holistic approach to addressing this human rights abuse in the United States. This bill, if passed, sends a strong message that the United States government stands against FGM as a form of gender-based violence.

I therefore urge you to support or cosponsor H.R. 6100.