

AN ACT PROTECTING GIRLS FROM GENITAL MUTILATION

SENATOR HARRIETTE CHANDLER, LEAD SENATE SPONSOR
REPRESENTATIVE SARAH PEAKE, LEAD HOUSE SPONSOR

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Female Genital Mutilation involves removing part or all of a girl's healthy sex organs and surrounding tissue for non-medical reasons resulting in health consequences, death in childbirth and lifelong trauma.

The statistics available on Female Genital Mutilation in the US are speculations mostly based on populations from FGM affected communities. In 2000, the African Women's Health Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital estimated that 227,887 women and girls in the United States were at risk of FGM, including girls living in Boston, Lawrence and Worcester, Massachusetts. Over the past few years, as victims have begun to speak out publicly, reports of transporting girls out of the country to be cut while vacationing have been widely disseminated in US news. A new prevalence study⁺⁺ reveals that the number of women and girls in Massachusetts, in 2013, who have had FGM performed on them or are at risk of FGM totaled 14,591 (4,843 under 18; 9,748, 18 and older). It also revealed that Massachusetts ranks as 12th in the nation for at-risk populations with the largest, at-risk metro areas being Boston, Newton, and Cambridge.

1 200 million women and girls worldwide live with FGM consequences.

2 30 million girls under the age of 15 are at risk, including girls living in the United States.

3 24 States have passed laws banning FGM, in some cases as amendments to child abuse laws. Make Massachusetts number 25.

4 FGM is performed to control a girl's sexuality and to ensure virginity until marriage and fidelity in marriage.

5 FGM is generally performed on young girls without anesthetics and can have lifelong health consequences including chronic infections, hemorrhage, severe pain during urination, menstruation and sexual intercourse.

6 FGM is recognized internationally as a human rights violation, torture and an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls.

7 FGM is unlike male circumcision because it is carried out with the intent of subjugating girls and controlling their bodies. Additionally, FGM damages a girl's sex organs.

8 Ending this harmful practice requires robust local laws because harm to children is a local concern and most effectively handled at the local level.

24 STATES HAVE ANTI-FGM LAWS MAKE MASSACHUSETTS NO.25

U.S. STATES WITH ANTI-FGM LAWS

State	Only applies to minors (under 18 unless otherwise specified)	Parent/ Guardian & circumciser subject to prosecution	“Vacation Provision ” banning travel outside the state for FGM	Medically necessary exception	Cultural/ ritual reasons, and/or consent not a defense	Provisions for community education & outreach
Arizona	x		x	x	x	
California	x	x		x		x
Colorado	Under 16	x		x	x	x
Delaware	x	x		x	x	
Florida	x	x	x	x	x	
Georgia	x	x	x	x	x	
Illinois		x		x	x	
Kansas	x	x	x	x	x	
Louisiana	x	x	x	x	x	
Maryland	x	x		x	x	
MASSACHUSETTS	X	X	X	X	X	X
Minnesota				x	x	x
Missouri	Under 17	x		x	x	
Nevada	x	x	x	x	x	
New Jersey	x	x	x	x	x	
New York	x	x		x	x	x
North Dakota	x			x	x	
Oklahoma				x	x	
Oregon	x	x		x	x	x
Rhode Island						
South Dakota	x	x	x	x	x	
Tennessee				x	x	
Texas	x			x	x	
West Virginia	x	x		x	x	
Wisconsin	x			x	x	

Legislation to criminalize FGM in Massachusetts has been endorsed by:

- + AHA Foundation
- + American Academy of Pediatrics, Massachusetts Chapter
- + American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, MA Section
- + Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights
- + Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley
- + Boston Mayor’s Office of Women’s Advancement
- + Casa Myrna Vasquez
- + Equality Now
- + Ethiopian Community Mutual Assistance Association
- + Health Imperatives
- + Health Quarters
- + Healthcare for All
- + Healthy Tomorrow
- + Inter African Community USA (IAC-USA)
- + Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center
- + Jane Doe, Inc.
- + Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston

- + Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
- + Massachusetts Children’s Alliance
- + Massachusetts Citizens for Children (“MassKids”)
- + Massachusetts District Attorney’s Association
- + Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
- + Massachusetts National Organization for Women (NOW)
- + Massachusetts School Nurses Association
- + Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- + Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts
- + Refugee Immigration Assistance Center (RIAC)
- + Somali Development Center
- + South End Community Health Center
- + The Children’s League of Massachusetts
- + The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
- + The Home for Little Wanderers
- + The Women’s Bar Association of Massachusetts