

STOP FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN WASHINGTON

PASS SB 5453

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) involves altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons, and is internationally recognized as a human rights violation that can cause negative health consequences, such as difficulties during childbirth, lifelong psychological and emotional trauma, and in some cases, even death. Unfortunately, it is all too common here in Washington.

A [2016 study](#) estimated that 25,000 girls and women living in Washington State are living with or at risk of undergoing FGM/C. They ranked the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metro area as the 5th highest metro area in the US in terms of the size of the FGM/C-affected community.

A federal FGM/C ban, first passed in 1996, has been amended and strengthened over the years to make it illegal for a girl to be taken overseas for the practice, to specifically include parents/guardians consenting to the procedure as a crime, and to call for government reporting on number individuals estimated to be impacted by FGM/C in the U.S. and government agencies' actions to end the practice.

Despite the federal law, state laws remain critical tools in preventing FGM/C. Specific state anti-FGM/C laws send a strong message that the practice is not acceptable. Comprehensive state legislation provides education and outreach on

FGM/C to local communities and professionals likely to encounter cases, bans taking a child outside of the state to undergo FGM/C, and gives survivors the opportunity to stand up for themselves in a court of law.

States across the country have taken action to ban FGM/C and provide support for victims. 40 states already have anti FGM/C laws, leaving communities in Washington vulnerable. A Washington ban on FGM/C is time-critical; lives are at stake.

Senate Bill 5453 will:

- ✓ Create a private right of action for victims of FGM/C
- ✓ Prohibit providers from performing FGM/C on a minor
- ✓ Establish education and outreach initiatives to prevent FGM/C
- ✓ Provide care for victims and families of FGM/C

Senate Bill 5453 is a necessary step that the Washington legislature must take to protect our state's youth and prevent future instances of FGM/C.

Take Action!

Sign the [Change.org Petition](#) asking the legislature to ban FGM/C in Washington

- 200 million people worldwide live with FGM/C consequences
- FGM/C has been reported to occur in over 92 countries in the world
- 30 million youth under the age of 15 are at risk, including girls living in the United States.
- FGM/C is performed for a variety of reasons, including to control a child's sexuality and to ensure virginity until marriage and fidelity in marriage.
- FGM/C in many cases can be performed on youth without anesthetics, but there is growing concern that FGM/C is being medicalized and performed by health professionals. In either situation, FGM/C can have lifelong health consequences including chronic infections, hemorrhage, severe pain during urination, menstruation, and sexual intercourse.

Source: [World Health Organization](#)

The Washington Coalition Against FGM/C is a group of survivors, activists and advocates we are working to ensure the state of WA passes a law ending the practice of FGC in the state. The coalition is survivor-led and is open to anyone who wants to be a part of the work.

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