



February 6th is International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a horrific form of violence against women that needs to be stopped. Currently, there are 11 states offering no protection to their young girls. IWV has urged these states to act and protect their young women and girls from FGM. On February 1, 2021, IWV sent the letter below to the following congressional delegations:

- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Alabama
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Alaska
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Connecticut
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Hawaii
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Indiana
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Maine
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Mississippi
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Montana
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Nebraska
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of New Mexico
- The Honorable Senators and Representatives of Washington

## **IWV Supports State Legislation Outlawing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

February 1, 2021

Dear Senators, Congresswomen and Congressmen:

Independent Women's Voice is an advocacy 501(c)(4) organization that fights for women and families by expanding support for policy solutions that aren't just well intended, but actually enhance people's freedom, choices, and opportunities. We believe strongly in protecting human rights and want to protect people from exploitation and abuse.

On January 5, 2021, President Trump signed the Strengthening the Opposition to Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2020, or **STOP FGM Act of 2020**, into law. This bipartisan legislation gives vulnerable young women and girls stronger protection from the horror of Female Genital Mutilation

(FGM). It increases U.S. federal penalties for committing this heinous practice, expands the scope of punishable offenses, and requires government agencies to submit an annual report to Congress that includes the estimated number of U.S. women and girls who have undergone or are at risk of FGM.

The **STOP FGM Act of 2020** is a significant step toward ensuring that no woman in the U.S.—where an estimated 513,000 women and girls have experienced or are at risk of FGM—endures this heinous procedure ever again. Yet young women and girls in your state are still at risk of being subject to a horrific form of violence. While 39 states have FGM laws on their books, as of today your state still does not outlaw FGM.

There is no reason all 50 states shouldn't have these important laws protecting vulnerable citizens. This would send a clear message that this practice has no place in our society. This is important for encouraging immigrant communities, which may have come to the U.S. from countries where FGM was culturally required, to reject these traditions.

There are no health benefits to FGM, it is traumatic for young girls to undergo, and it is **not** a religious practice. It is simply an intolerable violation of the human rights of young women and girls. Clearly, this is violence against women at its worst, and young women and girls in your state deserve to be protected from it.

Please act now to protect women and girls and send a message that FGM has no place in our society. If you would like more information, please contact Andrea Bottner of our organization at [abottner@iwv.org](mailto:abottner@iwv.org) who can provide further assistance.

Respectfully,



**Hadley Heath Manning**

*Director of Policy*

*Independent Women's Voice*