



June 25, 2019

Dear Senators,

Independent Women's Voice, which fights to enhance people's freedom, choices, and opportunities, is proud to support the Federal Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2019 introduced by Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-TN).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is defined by the World Health Organization as the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia for non-medical reasons. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated **513,000 women and girls in the United States** have experienced or are at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). FGM has been linked to serious medical complications, including infertility, severe bleeding, complications during childbirth, and death.

FGM is a criminal offense in the United States under federal law, yet in a recent court case in Michigan, in which a doctor was credibly accused of performing FGM on at least nine underage girls, the judge ruled that the federal law banning FGM was unconstitutional under the Commerce Clause, thereby dismissing all charges.

The Federal Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act would ensure that perpetrators of this atrocious crime are held accountable by amending the law to add the requisite Commerce Clause language. Addressing this constitutional defect will ensure that federal prosecutors can bring criminal charges against those charged with FGM.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is violence against women in its worst form. We must protect young girls from this horrific act and put an end to FGM in the U.S. once and for all.

We commend Senator Blackburn for her leadership on this important issue and urge all Senators to act immediately to protect future victims of FGM by voting yes in support of the Federal Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2019 when it comes to the floor for a vote.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hadley Heath Manning". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Hadley Heath Manning**

*Director of Policy,*

*Independent Women's Voice*