



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and during this month, we focus on female genital mutilation (FGM), a horrific form of violence against women that needs to be stopped. Currently, there are 15 states offering no protection to their young girls. IWV has asked those state governors to act and protect their young women and girls from FGM. On October 1, 2019, IWV sent the letter below to the following governors:

- Governor Charlie Baker (MA)
- Governor Matt Bevin (KY)
- Governor Phil Bryant (MS)
- Governor Steve Bullock (MT)
- Governor Mike Dunleavy (AK)
- Governor Mark Gordon (WY)
- Governor Michelle Grisham (NM)
- Governor Eric Holcomb (IN)
- Governor David Ige (HI)
- Governor Jay Inslee (WA)
- Governor Kay Ivey (AL)
- Governor Ned Lamont (CT)
- Governor Janet Mills (ME)
- Governor Pete Ricketts (NE)
- Governor Phil Scott (VT)

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

October 1, 2019

Dear Governors,

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.

Today, young women and girls in your state are at risk of being subject to a horrific form of violence. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia for non-medical reasons, as defined by the World Health Organization. It is happening in the United States, and there are girls in ***your state*** at risk. You can help protect them from this threat by working to ensure that your state legislature enacts legislation to outlaw female genital mutilation (FGM).

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 FGM. This number approximately doubled between 2000 and 2014.

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.

By adopting legislation to outlaw FGM, your state 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.

Currently, there are 35 states that have FGM laws on their books. There is no reason all 50 states shouldn't have these important laws protecting vulnerable citizens.

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@iwf.org](mailto:abottner@iwf.org) who can provide further assistance.

Respectfully,



**Hadley Heath Manning**

*Director of Policy*

*Independent Women's Voice*