

HB1389\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
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## **TESTIMONY ON HB#1389 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

### **Public Health - Female Genital Mutilation**

**TO:** Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis and members of the Judiciary Committee  
**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ HB#/1389, Public Health - Female Genital Mutilation**

UNICEF for Every Child defines *What is female genital mutilation? - Everything you need to know about FGM and what UNICEF is doing to stop it*<sup>1</sup>

Female genital mutilation (FGM) refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is most often carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15. In every form in which it is practiced, FGM is a violation of girls' and women's fundamental human rights, including their rights to health, security and dignity.

FGM has no health benefits and can lead to serious, long-term complications and even death. Immediate health risks include hemorrhage, shock, infection, HIV transmission, urine retention and severe pain. Psychological impacts can range from a girl losing trust in her caregivers, to longer-term feelings of anxiety and depression. In adulthood, girls subjected to FGM are more likely to suffer infertility or complications during childbirth, including postpartum hemorrhage, stillbirth and early neonatal death.

The intent of this bill is to classify FGM as abuse and add reporting requirements if it is detected as well as increasing penalties when it is performed.

The bill will alter the definition of "abuse" to include female genital mutilation for the purposes of a provision of law requiring certain persons to provide notice of suspected abuse or neglect of a child or make a written report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child; alter the actions regarding female genital mutilation in which a person is prohibited from engaging; increasing the penalties for a violation of certain provisions related to female genital mutilation; etc.

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**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB1389.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/stories/female-genital-mutilation>