

March 6, 2026

Maryland House of Representatives
House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 100
6 Bladen St, Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for HB 1389 - 2025-26

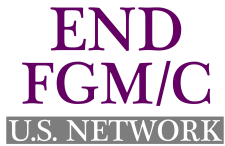
Dear House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express [The U.S. End FGM/C Network](#)'s strong support for HB 1389, to expand the definition of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), prohibit vacation cutting, mandate community education and outreach, and provide the right to civil action in Maryland. As members of the House Judiciary Committee, The U.S. End FGM/C Network requests that you vote the bill favorably out of committee and urge House and Senate Leadership to bring the bills to their respective chambers for a vote.

Although there is a state law prohibiting FGM/C in Maryland, HB 1389 is a necessary and urgent addition to the current law as it will ensure the state has comprehensive, holistic legislation that addresses FGM/C and responds to the needs of survivors and impacted communities. HB 1389 will build on the 1998 law by:

- **Updating the definition of FGM/C** to align with the World Health Organization and explicitly classify it as a form of abuse.
- **Including a vacation cutting provision** to prohibit transporting girls out of state for FGM/C.
- **Implementing community education and outreach programs** to raise awareness about FGM/C and available survivor services.
- **Establishing a civil action mechanism**, allowing survivors to seek damages and protective remedies to support their healing and recovery.

The DMV Area was ranked as having the second-highest metro area ([Washington-Arlington-Alexandria](#)) in the United States with over 40,000 women and girls who are at risk or have undergone FGM/C. In Maryland alone, there are 25,736 women and girls who are at risk or have undergone FGM/C. In the United States, more than half a million women and girls are at risk or have undergone FGM/C, though this number is severely underreported and is anticipated to be much higher. Additionally, not only is FGM/C internationally recognized as a human rights violation and a form of child abuse, it is also a severe form of sexual violence. Therefore, Maryland law should explicitly recognize FGM/C as a form of abuse to ensure mandatory reporting and provide survivors with the same services and protections available to survivors of other



forms of abuse. HB 1389 will help ensure this occurs.

The U.S. End FGM/C Network's mission is to eliminate FGM/C by connecting, supporting, elevating, and advocating on behalf of and with diverse US stakeholders engaged in prevention, education, and care. We are a collaborative group of over 200 members including FGM/C survivors, civil society organizations, foundations, activists, policy makers, researchers, healthcare providers, and others committed to promoting the abandonment of FGM/C in the U.S. and globally.

The U.S. End FGM/C Network fully supports this bill and respectfully urges you to immediately take the necessary steps to pass HB 1389. Maryland lawmakers have an important opportunity to protect girls, support survivors, and close critical gaps in the state's response to FGM/C.

You can reach The U.S. End FGM/C Network by contacting Caitlin LeMay at caitlin@endfgmnetwork.org if you have any questions or would like additional information on FGM/C.

Sincerely,

Caitlin LeMay
Executive Director
The U.S. End FGM/C Network