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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
May 9, 2019

Honorable Lisa Baker, Chairwoman
Senate Judiciary Committee
Senate Box 203020
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3020

Dear Chairwoman Baker,

I hope this finds you well. I write with regard to the criminalization of Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting (FGM/C) in Pennsylvania.

For over two decades, young girls in the United States have been federally protected from this abhorrent practice. In November 2018, however, a U.S. District Judge presiding over a current case in Michigan ruled the federal statute unconstitutional and last month, on April 11, the U.S. Department of Justice notified Congress of their decision not to appeal the ruling in *U.S. v. Nagarwala*. It's now critically urgent for each state across our Nation to pass state laws banning the practice.

I'm gravely concerned that Pennsylvania is one of 19 states yet to explicitly prohibit FGM/C. A strong state law banning the practice will save the lives of innocent young girls, send a strong message that FGM/C has no place in Pennsylvania, and give law enforcement officials the tools and resources to bring perpetrators to justice. Most importantly, Pennsylvania must pass a state law to avoid creating a de facto sanctuary for FGM/C activities; a perceived safe haven will cause girls to be brought across state lines to be subject to FGM/C - an issue I'm specifically addressing at the federal level.

FGM/C is widely recognized by the international community as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. The practice comprises all procedures that involve the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other damage to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Over 200 million women and girls alive today are survivors of the practice, and an estimated 3 million girls are at risk of FGM/C this year alone. In the United States, the Centers of Disease Control estimated in 2016 that 513,000 women and girls were at risk or had been subjected to FGM/C. In the Commonwealth, over 19,000 young girls are estimated to be at risk for FGM/C, according to the AHA Foundation.

Our colleagues in the State House already passed a proposal to criminalize the practice in Pennsylvania. I strongly commend this accomplishment, and urge you to please continue this momentum towards a state law. Now is the time for Pennsylvania to act.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I hope that you'll join me in protecting some of society's most innocent - in Pennsylvania and across the United States - from this abhorrent practice.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Perry".

SCOTT PERRY
Member of Congress
10th District, Pennsylvania