

Statement on Falsely Equating Gender-Affirming Health Care and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

The U.S. FGM/C Network (“The Network”) and the Tahirih Justice Center are concerned about legislation to ban gender-affirming health care, including puberty blockers and hormone replacement therapy for Trans youth in particular.

Our main priority is to protect against FGM/C and other forms of gender-based violence. We are disheartened to see legislation conflating gender-affirming care with FGM/C in efforts to discriminate against vulnerable youth.

The World Health Organization defines FGM/C as all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice has no health benefits and can lead to a range of serious, negative physical and mental health outcomes.

Gender-affirming care for Trans youth and FGM/C are not the same. We firmly believe that these two very important issues should not be linked through legislation that seeks to criminalize gender-affirming care or associated in any other context.

In addition, we condemn any legislation that frames FGM/C in an attempt to stigmatize, marginalize or scapegoat communities. Such framing goes against The Network’s [values](#) and the values of the [Tahirih Justice Center](#). We believe in approaching ending FGM/C and differing opinions with understanding, empathy, and sensitivity to prevent discrimination, targeting, blame, and shaming.

We call on all states and the federal government to refrain from falsely equating gender-affirming care and FGM/C and to focus instead on the prevention of FGM/C and all forms of gender-based violence and the promotion and protection of human rights for all.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The **U.S. End FGM/C Network** is a collaborative group of over 150 members including FGM/C survivors, civil society organizations, foundations, activists, policymakers, researchers, healthcare providers, and others committed to promoting the abandonment of FGM/C in the U.S. and globally. To learn more about our work, please visit endfgmnetwork.org.

Contact:
Caitlin LeMay
Executive Director
caitlin@endfgmnetwork.org

The **Tahirih Justice Center** is a national, nonprofit organization that serves immigrant survivors of gender-based violence. Through our specialized Forced Marriage Initiative, Tahirih is leading efforts at the federal and state levels in the United States to address forced and child marriage as a domestic problem that affects both U.S. citizen and immigrant women and girls. To learn more about our work, please visit tahirih.org.

Contact:
Casey Carter Swegman
Director of Public Policy
CaseyS@tahirih.org