

New bill to ban gender-affirming care raises concerns for both trans youth and FGM survivors, experts warn

Lawmakers urged to oppose bill H.R. 3492, which conflates female genital mutilation with gender-affirming care, putting FGM survivors and trans youth at risk.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Leading legal, human rights, and medical

professionals are urging lawmakers to oppose Congressional bill H.R. 3492, which seeks to criminalize gender-affirming care for individuals under age 18 by expanding the scope of the STOP FGM Act - a law explicitly drafted to protect women and girls from female genital mutilation (FGM).



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Anastasia Law, Equality Now

If enacted, the proposed legislation would extend the federal law prohibiting FGM by making it a crime to perform gender-affirming healthcare on minors.

Equality Now and fellow human rights advocates warn that conflating gender-affirming healthcare with FGM undermines critical legal protections against FGM, while simultaneously preventing transgender minors from accessing essential medical support to help them live in a

way that matches their gender identity.

Equality Now's Anastasia Law says: "We are deeply concerned that legislation designed to address female genital mutilation, which is a form of gender-based violence, is being misused to fuel a broader rollback of bodily autonomy in the US. Gender-affirming care and FGM are not the same in any sense. Conflating them jeopardizes the fight to end FGM and endangers transgender youth."

FGM AND GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE SHOULD NOT BE CONFLATED

FGM involves the partial or complete removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is universally recognized by medical authorities and international law as a human rights violation and a severe form of gender-based violence that can amount to torture.

A 2025 report by Equality Now, the US End FGM/C Network, and the End FGM European Network collated evidence of [FGM in 94 countries](#). In the US, over 500,000 women and girls are at risk of or have undergone this harmful practice.

FGM has no health benefits and can cause serious immediate and long-term physical, sexual, and psychological harms, including chronic infections, infertility, complications during childbirth, and even death.

In contrast, gender-affirming care is a medically necessary, evidence-based treatment undertaken with informed consent, provided in accordance with professional standards, and supported by the American Medical Association and World Health Organization, among others. Research demonstrates that it significantly improves mental health outcomes and reduces the risk of suicide.

H.R. 3492 misleadingly blurs distinctions between the two, creating confusion in legal interpretation and thwarting both FGM prevention efforts and trans health protections.

CURTAILING GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE

Also known as the 'Protect Children's Innocence Act,' H.R. 3492 emerges from a movement in several US states to limit gender-affirming medical care for minors, often under the mistaken guise of protecting children.

A White House Executive Order in January 2025 branded gender-affirming care as "mutilation," and a memo by the US Attorney General instructed the Department of Justice (DOJ) to prosecute healthcare providers under the federal FGM law. On August 4, 16 states and the District of Columbia filed a lawsuit challenging the Executive Order on the grounds that it unlawfully targets transgender individuals.

In July 2025, the DOJ issued a subpoena to the Children's Hospital Colorado in an apparent investigation into gender-affirming care for transgender youth being reportedly provided at the state's largest pediatric specialty hospital. The subpoena is part of a wider national investigation.

Equality Now's policy brief, 'Opposing the [conflation of female genital mutilation and gender-affirming](#) care in the US,' sheds light on the growing US trend of conflating gender-affirming care with FGM and the legal, medical, and human rights risks this poses.

LAWMAKERS URGED TO VOTE AGAINST H.R. 3492

H.R. 3492 has already passed the House Judiciary Committee and now heads to the full House of Representatives, where it must pass a vote to proceed. While Congress is in recess, lawmakers have the opportunity to consider the far-reaching harms arising from misdirecting legislation meant to safeguard girls from FGM.

Almost 100 civil society organizations from around the world have [co-signed an open letter](#) urging the US Government to preserve the integrity of the country's federal FGM law and ensure domestic laws are consistent with international human rights obligations.

Anastasia Law explains: "What's happening is the politicization of FGM to advance anti-trans agendas. This undermines the credibility of laws protecting girls from FGM and puts transgender youth, already at risk of serious mental health struggles, at even greater risk. The US has legal and moral obligations to uphold people's rights to make personal decisions about their own bodies and allow access to essential healthcare. H.R. 3492 compromises both."

About: Equality Now is a worldwide human rights organisation dedicated to securing the legal and systemic change needed to end discrimination against all women and girls, everywhere in the world. Since its inception in 1992, it has played a role in reforming 120 discriminatory laws globally, positively impacting the lives of hundreds of millions of women and girls, their communities and nations, both now and for generations to come.

Working with partners at national, regional, and global levels, Equality Now draws on deep legal expertise and a diverse range of social, political, and cultural perspectives to continue to lead the way in steering, shaping, and driving the change needed to achieve enduring gender equality, to the benefit of all.

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