

SUBVERTING EQUALITY

Girls have been protected (without any religious or cultural exceptions) from genital mutilation since 1997 by United States Federal law yet the ACLU does not consider boys to be deserving of equal rights.

Not only do the actions of the ACLU continue to deny men the right to control their own bodies, they also prevent religious freedom by sanctioning the branding of children's bodies with the religious mark of others. Furthermore, since male circumcision results in a permanently diminished sexual experience, the ACLU's work to enshrine forced circumcision is a severe blow to those fighting for sexual freedom.

DEMAND CHANGE

Tell the ACLU that it is on the wrong side of human rights when it comes to ending the forced circumcision of boys.

Refuse to donate to any ACLU affiliate until ACLU National changes its position to defend the civil liberties of men to keep and control their whole body the same way that women do.

ABOUT BAY AREA INTACTIVISTS

Founded in 2001, Bay Area Intactivists is a human rights organization with members working to eradicate all forms of forced genital cutting including routine infant circumcision. Members participate in various community events to educate and raise awareness of the right of all individuals—male, female, and intersex—to genital autonomy.



www.bayareaintactivists.org

DEFENDING RITUAL VIOLENCE

**How the ACLU
opposes equality,
sexual freedom,
and men's right to
body autonomy**

THE DOUBLE STANDARD

Despite the fact that some cultures hold female circumcision in high esteem, routine infant or childhood circumcision is not recommended for girls by any national medical organization in the world.

Female minors in the United States have been protected from all forms of forced genital cutting or genital mutilation since a Federal law took effect in 1997. There is no religious or cultural exemption for families whose tradition includes cutting the genitals of their daughters. Even a ceremonial pinprick to draw a symbolic drop of blood is not permitted under Federal law.

Like female circumcision, there is no medical organization in the world that recommends routine infant or childhood circumcision for boys. Genital cutting results in scarring, nerve damage, and varying degrees of sexual dysfunction for all children regardless of sex. Genital cutting also includes risks up to and including death. Despite these facts, boys and intersex children in the United States continue to be denied equal protection from genital mutilation.

SQUELCHING DEMOCRACY

In 2011, the San Francisco Male Genital Mutilation Bill, a ballot initiative to restrict non-therapeutic circumcision to consenting adults, garnered the support of over 12,000 San Francisco voters and fully qualified to be on the November ballot.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California in conjunction with the Jewish Community Relations Council argued that should it pass, the ballot initiative would violate the parental right to subject boys to ritual circumcision in order to satisfy the religious beliefs of parents.

The ACLUNC lent its support in a lawsuit against the city of San Francisco to have the initiative removed from the ballot thus denying voters their voice.

PROTECTING THE STATUS QUO

Following the lawsuit against the city of San Francisco, the ACLUNC endorsed AB 768, a state law which prohibits any city in California from passing legislation that would protect male minors from forced, non-therapeutic circumcision.

IN DEFENSE OF HYPOCRISY

In response to outrage from the community over these actions of the ACLUNC, a representative from ACLU National defended the decisions of its Northern California affiliate:

“The ACLU applauded the ruling in 2011 by a San Francisco Superior Court judge that invalidated the proposed circumcision ban and removed it from the ballot. The Court held that the measure is clearly invalid because California law explicitly prevents localities from criminalizing recognized medical procedures that offer clear health benefits.

Conducting a popular vote on whether to criminalize a minority religious practice fosters sectarian strife. This initiative would have undermined the right to religious liberty that we cherish in a pluralistic society.

The Court’s ruling protects the rights of parents to direct their children’s religious upbringing and medical care, and ensures that San Francisco voters will not have to vote on something that clearly conflicts with California law.”