

Alþingi
Kirkjustræti
150 Reykjavík

March 26, 2018

Ágæta Alþingi / Dear Members of the Parliament

I am an American of Nordic ancestry and am writing to support the ban on cutting the genitals of children without a medical necessity.

Even though my father was an intact (not circumcised) physician born to Norwegian-American parents, I was circumcised as a newborn simply because that is what was done to the overwhelming majority of infant boys in the United States when I was born. There was no medical justification for it. As a matter of fact, my 2 older brothers were circumcised without anyone asking my parents for permission. Circumcision was as automatic as cutting the baby's umbilical cord. It was "Standard Procedure" and very few people were questioning it.

I was circumcised by a doctor in a hospital and had complications from my circumcision which I have suffered with for 65 years. My earliest memory is of not understanding why I did not look like my 2 older brothers or any other boys I saw in the locker room when we went swimming. When someone tells you that circumcision is "safe" when done properly by a doctor in a hospital or other medical setting, they are not telling the truth. Circumcision removes healthy, normal tissue which has many important functions. Even without complications, circumcision is not harmless.

It wasn't until I was 46 years old that I finally found the courage to start speaking up about what had happened to me and I found that I was not alone. There are many people - male, female, and intersex - who have been damaged physically and psychologically by medically unnecessary genital cutting. Many of them are too ashamed and embarrassed to speak up. It takes a lot of courage to admit to oneself and to others that one has been damaged in such an intimate part of their body.

I have been to Iceland (in 2014) and I took showers at the public pools in various towns around Iceland before using the pools, hot tubs, and water slides. I am aware that circumcision is almost never done in Iceland.

Very few adults ever volunteer to be circumcised. I hope that members of the Alþingi keep that in mind. Genital mutilation is done to children. If an adult won't do it to their own body, they should not allow it to be done to a

child's body.

I would like to suggest that the Alpingi watch the documentary "CUT: Slicing Through the Myths of Circumcision" which was made by an Orthodox Jewish man who opposes infant/child circumcision. You can see me speaking up on this issue in the trailer for the film at www.cutthefilm.com

This is about Human Rights. In my 19 years of public work on this issue, I have met many people - male/female/intersex, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, animist, atheist, etc. - who have all been harmed by genital cutting. You are under pressure from religious organizations and individuals to allow circumcision. Keep in mind that these people do not speak for all Jews, Muslims, Christians, etc.

I urge you to protect all children. Adults can make up their own minds about their own bodies.

Sincerely,

Daniel T Strandjord

Aurora, CO USA