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March 27, 2018

Alþingi  
Kirkjustræti  
150 Reykjavík

Ágæta Alþingi / Dear Members of the Parliament:

I am writing on behalf of Intact America, a human rights organization that calls for all children to be protected from medically unnecessary surgery on their genitalia. In the United States, Intact America claims a following of more than 75,000 supporters and activists. In any given month, hundreds of thousands of individuals from around the world see our messages and materials.

Intact America is committed to advancing and protecting the rights and equality of all people – particularly, in the case of those who cannot advocate for themselves. Thus, Intact America endorses the principle of equal protection from forced, medically unnecessary and irreversible surgeries, and supports legal efforts to protect all children from genital cutting, alteration, or modification.

From a bioethical perspective, respect for an individual's autonomy implies that he or she has the capacity to act and decide intentionally, with understanding, and without coercion or influences that would mitigate against a free and voluntary act. "Proxy" (e.g., parental) consent is only valid for medical procedures that are intended to save the life or health of a child. Because the foreskin is a normal, healthy anatomical structure, neither parents nor guardians have no right to solicit or consent to foreskin removal on behalf of the child. Therefore, childhood circumcision, except in extremely rare cases where a pathological condition is present, violates the principles of informed consent and cannot ethically be performed by medical practitioners or in medical settings.

From the perspective of religion or "culture," Intact America recognizes the right of parents to raise their children in accordance with their own cultural and religious standards. However, this right is not limitless. Intact America holds that a child's right to bodily integrity outweighs parental preference, cultural norms, and religious rituals. Therefore, parents may not (directly, or through the agency of a medical or religious practitioner) harm a child physically and irreversibly in the name of religion or culture.

The proposed legislation in Iceland is consistent with both bioethical principles and contemporary understandings of human rights. Thus, Intact America strongly supports the bill before your legislative body.

Thank you for your opportunity to submit this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Georganne Chapin".

Georganne Chapin  
Executive Director