

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5257

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As of February 12, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to restricting the practice of female genital mutilation.

**Brief Description:** Restricting the practice of female genital mutilation.

**Sponsors:** Senators Keiser, Cleveland, Dhingra, Randall, Kuderer, Darneille, Das, Hunt, Mullet and Palumbo.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long Term Care: 2/01/19.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Makes it unprofessional conduct for a health care professional to perform female genital mutilation.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

**Staff:** LeighBeth Merrick (786-7445)

**Background:** The Department of Health (DOH) certifies, licenses, and regulates 44 health professions in Washington State. Most of these health professions are governed by a board, commission or advisory committee which are supported by DOH. All health professions are subject to the Uniform Disciplinary Act (UDA). Under the UDA, DOH or a professional board or commission investigates unprofessional conduct claims, and may take disciplinary action against a licensed health care provider. Disciplining actions include fines, license revocations, and restrictions on practice.

**Summary of Bill:** It is unprofessional conduct for a licensed health care provider to perform female genital mutilation.

Female genital mutilation means circumcision, excision, or infibulation of the whole or any part of the labia majora, labia minora, or clitoris that is performed for nonmedical reasons any patient under the age of eighteen or any nonconsenting patient age eighteen or older.

**Appropriation:** None.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Federal courts ruled that the federal female genital mutilation ban is unconstitutional and that states should develop their own laws for addressing the issue. This would prohibit performing female genital mutilation on minors. It is a human rights violation with zero health benefits and very severe consequences that no child should have happen to them.

OTHER: This needs to be an all or nothing approach and should be applied to male genital mutilation as well. Male genital mutilation is seen as benign and female genital mutilation is seen as severe when in fact male genital mutilation can be much more severe. This would be an issue of equality if it is not applied to male genital mutilation.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Karen Keiser, Prime Sponsor; Heather Pauley, Bremerton School District.

OTHER: John Sambrook; John Adkison, Genital Autonomy Society.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.