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## TESTIMONY OF HOUSTON PUTNAM LOWRY IN SUPPORT OF SB: 505 – AN ACT PROHIBITING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

This testimony is submitted in support of SB: 505 – An Act Prohibiting Female Genital Mutilation. It seems hard to believe such legislation is necessary in the twenty-first century, but apparently that is so.

Needless to say, the practice of female genital mutilation is barbaric and should not be allowed in the State of Connecticut on (i) minors nor (ii) people who cannot give informed consent. That being said, a person of sound mind and over the age of 18 should be able to do what they want to their body even though other people might disapprove.

I would suggest the following modifications to this bill before it is favorably reported:

1. A conservator should *not* be able to give permission for a female genital mutilation to be performed on any patient over 18 years of age.
2. The bill should also prohibit travel outside of the State of Connecticut for the purpose of obtaining a female genital mutilation on (i) any person under the age of 18 years or (ii) any person over the age of 18 years under conservatorship.
3. The phrase “necessary to the health of the person on whom it is performed”<sup>1</sup> should read “medically necessary to the health of the person on whom it is performed”.
4. I see no reason to expand the exemption to persons training to become such a physician or nurse-midwife (page 1, line 12-13). This should be deleted.
5. The phrase “A surgical operation is not necessary to the health of the person on whom it is performed if the basis for such necessity is the belief of such person or any other person that such operation is required as a matter of custom or ritual”<sup>2</sup> should be changed to read: “The belief such a surgical operation is required as a matter of custom or ritual does not constitute a medical necessity”. This should make the language easier to understand without changing the meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> Page 1, lines 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Page 1, lines 13-16 and page 2, line 1.

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I request the Judiciary Committee favorably report this bill to the General Assembly with the indicated modifications.