



**Genital Autonomy
Legal Defense and Education Fund**
Affirming rights. Protecting choice. Redressing harm.
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NEWS RELEASE

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Legal Organization Aims to Protect Children’s Bodily Integrity
Asserts Genital Autonomy is for Everyone

PALM SPRINGS, California – A new non-profit legal defense fund has launched with the aim of expanding the rights of children to bodily integrity and self-determination over the most private part of their bodies—their genitals. The Genital Autonomy Legal Defense and Education Fund (GALDEF) intends to raise funds to support impact litigation: lawsuits with the potential to advance equitable protection of children from non-therapeutic genital cutting regardless of sex.

The GALDEF mission is reflected in its motto “Affirming rights. Protecting choice. Redressing harm.” The organization plans to create training seminars to educate a new generation of attorneys to bring successful cases challenging inadequate circumcision consent forms, hospitals and doctors who aggressively solicit new parents for infant circumcision, and state Medicaid payments for medically unnecessary circumcisions.

The organization’s founder and president, genital autonomy pioneer Tim Hammond, and curator of the CircumcisionHarm.org website, noted “Those subjected to unnecessary childhood genital cutting are increasingly seeking legal recourse for the harm done to them.” Hammond also noted that according to a growing number of legal scholars, forced non-therapeutic genital cutting of healthy children based on specious health arguments constitutes consumer fraud, is medically unethical and violates human rights.

“Genital cutting customs” Hammond said, “raise serious questions about bodily autonomy, the core question being ‘Who should decide how much of a child’s genitals they get to keep?’”

In the U.S., girls are protected at the Federal level and in most states from genital cutting that ranges from the most severe forms (clitoridectomy/infibulation) to minor forms involving removal of the female foreskin (clitoral hood), or piercing and nicking, which remove no tissue. Hammond says a growing number of physicians, ethicists and human rights advocates now acknowledge that infant male circumcision removes more tissue than most minor forms of female genital cutting.

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In recent years intersex lobbyists have persuaded several hospitals, including Lurie Children's Hospital (Chicago) and Boston Children's Hospital, to end medically unnecessary 'gender-normalizing' surgeries that intersex activists have called 'genital mutilation.'

According to Hammond, because boys have no such legal protections, between 1.2 and 1.5 million healthy infant males each year are subjected to medically unnecessary circumcision, primarily for social reasons.

Circumcision is a surgery that removes the penile prepuce (foreskin) that all males are born with. Hammond notes that females are also born with a foreskin, the "clitoral hood", which is illegal to cut. He says the ablation of healthy, protective and sexually functional tissue from newborns results in the destruction of the most erogenous part of the penis, and the loss of from one-third to one-half of the total penile skin system.

The organization's website cites numerous attorney endorsements, including David Llewellyn of Atlanta (GA)—known as the 'circumcision lawyer' for his successes in challenging circumcision in the courts—who remarked "I think this is a great idea. We have needed such a fund for a long time."

The founder of Doctors Opposing Circumcision, George Denniston, MD, endorsed the new organization saying: "Doctors will put down their scalpels when they realize that the profits from non-therapeutic infant male circumcision are no match against lawsuits asserting fraud and establishing the rights of children to bodily integrity."

Since the 1940s, U.S. legal defense and education funds serving African Americans, Latinos, women, LGBTQ+ people, immigrants and others have been instrumental in advancing human and civil rights and have played a key role in effecting social change.

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