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press release

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Activists Condemn Circumcision of Almost 3-year Old Boy

SAN DIEGO, California – Activists opposed to the practice of male circumcision condemned a Kansas City father's decision to circumcise his almost 3-year old son before the Missouri Supreme Court had a chance to rule on the issue. The boy's mother did not want her son circumcised and had petitioned the court to intervene, but within the last week an unidentified doctor went ahead and performed the procedure under direction from the boy's father. The boy, Ethan Azar, turns 3 next month.

Matthew Hess, President of San Diego based MGMbill.org, said Ethan was discriminated against because of his gender.

"If Ethan had been born a girl, Ray Jagoda (Ethan's father) and the doctor that circumcised him would be in prison right now," said Hess. "Both of these individuals should be charged with assault."

Van Lewis, a Panacea, Florida, anti-circumcision activist, made a similar comment. "Put the shoe on the other foot for a moment," he said. "Suppose it was a Muslim or African tribal father who wanted to circumcise his daughter over the objections of her mother who was trying to save her child from female genital mutilation. The father would be locked up under the jail and they'd throw away the key."

Although all forms of female circumcision have been illegal in the United States since the passage of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Prohibition Act in 1996, circumcision of boys is still commonplace. The practice is growing increasingly controversial as mounting medical evidence shows that male circumcision causes permanent damage to male sexual function.

"There are thousands of highly specialized nerve endings in the foreskin," said Hess. "The foreskin has a very specific function – to enhance male sexual pleasure. Ethan's right to make his own choice about his future sexual health has been stolen from him."

Camille Azar, Ethan's mother (from Lee's Summit, MO), agreed. "The law is completely unfair, because this wouldn't have happened if Ethan was female. Despite the legal filings I made to protect my son, Ethan was subjected to male genital mutilation by force."

A growing number of people are calling on Congress to amend the FGM Prohibition Act, claiming that it violates the equal protection guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Earlier this year, MGMbill.org submitted a bill proposal to Congress that would amend the law to add protection for boys. It is currently being evaluated by legislators and their staff.