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DEBORAH V. ORTIZ
CHAIR

STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 2191
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 445-5965
(916) 324-0384 FAX

STAFF DIRECTOR
PETER HANSEL

COMMITTEE ASSISTANT
AMOFIA (MOE) KATSIMBRAS



May 18, 2005

Matthew Hess
President, MGMBill.org

San Diego, CA

Dear Mr. Hess:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding male circumcision. I am aware of the controversial nature of this practice, and appreciate your passion for the issue. At this time, I do not have a position on the issue, but certainly am open to learning more about the arguments and research on both sides of the debate. While the information you shared is compelling, I also have reviewed recent research showing higher HIV and HPV transmission rates in uncircumcised men. I agree with you that circumcision should not be viewed as the first or most important STD prevention strategy. Nevertheless, its impact cannot be ignored.

Moreover, I have to concur with Senator Kehoe's comments to you about the need for the support of respected and recognized health and human rights organizations in order for such an effort to succeed. Finally, my own legislative agenda is quite full, focusing on stem cell research, environmental health protections, the affordability of pharmaceuticals, and cancer prevention. This is not to say that I am not open to new issues, however my priorities for the short time remaining in my term in office have developed over the past many years, reflecting widespread concerns of both my constituents and Californians in general. As a result, I am unable to take on this issue at this time.

I do appreciate your desire to provide the utmost health and human rights protections for baby boys, and am confident that other legislators and health professionals will take up your cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Ortiz".

SENATOR DEBORAH V. ORTIZ
Senator, 6th District

