

# OLD FIRST CHURCH

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January 16, 2008

The Hon. Frank Pallone  
237 Cannon Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-4671

Dear Representative Pallone:

As Pastor of Old First Church and a constituent who lives in Plainfield, New Jersey, I am writing you to urge you to join the other 32 Members of the House who have written the Attorney General to review the decision of the Board of Immigration Appeals in Matter of A-T-, a decision that undermines the rights of women who have been subjected to the horror of female genital mutilation.

This decision is utterly outrageous. To say that a woman who has been brutalized in this matter should not obtain protection in the United States based on her past suffering is unconscionable. The woman in this case is also someone who will be forced into a marriage with a first cousin who will be permitted to further brutalize her through marital rape. This is a second level of horror.

Adam Liptak has written a strong article in The New York Times, and any person of conscience can see that a person in such a situation needs protection here in the United States. I understand that part of the problem may be that the woman in question did not apply for asylum within the year of her entry, but surely even under the withholding standard, she is a target for persecution. And she has suffered in the past.

I will be bringing this matter up with my congregation. I hope you will speak for the rights of women and sign onto the letter that your colleagues have written.

Respectfully Yours,

Rev. Joyce Antila Phipps  
Pastor