

# Evangelicals wade into circumcision debate

by [Adelle M. Banks](#)

June 10, 2011

(RNS) The National Association of Evangelicals is siding with Jews and Muslims in opposition of a proposed ban on infant male circumcision in San Francisco.

"Jews, Muslims, and Christians all trace our spiritual heritage back to Abraham. Biblical circumcision begins with Abraham," NAE President Leith Anderson said in a statement. "No American government should restrict this historic tradition. Essential religious liberties are at stake."

The proposed ban, which does not include a religious exemption, would prevent circumcision of male children in San Francisco. If passed, circumcisions would be considered a misdemeanor that could carry a fine of up to \$1,000 or a year in jail.

The NAE said the proposal violates the First Amendment's clause protecting the free exercise of religion.

"While evangelical denominations traditionally neither require nor forbid circumcision, we join Jews and Muslims in opposing this ban and standing together for religious freedom," said Anderson.

The Anti-Defamation League has also condemned the proposed ban, calling it an "assault on parental choice, legitimate medical practice, and religious freedom." ADL leaders also expressed outrage when supporters of the ban promoted it with a cartoon character named "Foreskin Man."

Matthew Hess, president of an anti-circumcision organization that supports the ban, has written on Twitter that the "Foreskin Man" series

is not anti-Semitic.

"People who forcefully cut the genitals of children are not reasonable," he wrote. "If they were reasonable, they would have stopped doing it by now."