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TWENTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

ASSEMBLY BILL 2943: Declare Conversion Therapy a Fraudulent Practice

SUMMARY

AB 2943 declares sexual orientation change efforts, also known as conversion therapy or reparative therapy, a fraudulent business practice under the Consumer Legal Remedies Act.

BACKGROUND

Conversion therapy is a set of dangerous and discredited practices that falsely claim to be able to change a person's sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual, change their gender identity or expression, or lessen their same-sex sexual attraction. The American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the National Association of Social Workers, and the American Medical Association all oppose the practice on the basis that it is not evidence-based and potentially harmful to a patient's mental health.

In 2012, California passed SB 1172 (Chapter 835, Statutes of 2012) to prohibit mental health providers from performing sexual orientation change efforts with a patient under 18 years of age. Violating this law subjects the provider to discipline by the provider's licensing entity.

Since then, this practice has been banned for minors in nine other states, the District of Columbia and 32 local municipalities, reaffirming a growing national consensus that this practice is harmful.

PROBLEM

While California has banned conversion therapy as a practice for minors, it is still being practiced on adults even though contemporary science recognizes that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) is part of the natural spectrum of human identity and is not a disease, disorder, or illness.

The American Psychological Association convened the Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, which conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed journal literature on sexual orientation change efforts and issued a report in 2009. The task force

concluded that sexual orientation change efforts can pose critical health risks to LGBTQ people, including depression, suicidality, substance abuse, high-risk sexual behaviors, loss of friends and potential romantic partners, social withdrawal, a feeling of being dehumanized, and a loss of faith, to name a few.¹

There is overwhelming empirical evidence indicating its harmfulness. Study after study has shown that conversion therapy is ineffective, damaging and counterproductive. It is the responsibility of the State of California to protect consumers from such deceptive practices that will expose them to physical and emotional harm.

SOLUTION

AB 2943 would declare conversion therapy a fraudulent practice under the Consumer Legal Remedies Act. Doing so would extend certain consumer protections to individuals damaged by conversion therapy efforts.

AB 2943 is needed to increase accountability for those who claim to provide therapy but are in fact peddling an unfounded and destructive practice.

SUPPORT

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
API Equality-LA
Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee (BAYMEC)
California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce
California Medical Association
California Psychological Association
Consumer Attorneys of California
Equality California
Friends Committee on Legislation of California
Hollywood Now
Human Rights Campaign
LA LGBT Center
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (LCHC)
National Center for Lesbian Rights
Sacramento LGBT Center
SF AIDS Foundation
Stonewall Democratic Club
Trevor Project

¹ American Psychological Association, *Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation* (2009), available at www.APA.org/pi/LGBT/Resources/Therapeutic-Response.pdf.