



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 14, 2012

## California Bill Would Ban or Restrict Homosexual Conversion Therapy

If California State Senator Ted Lieu (D) has his way, parents whose children struggle with unwanted same-sex attraction will not be able to seek help for their children through reparative therapy — treatment that has been found effective in helping individuals overcome homosexual tendencies. According to the [Washington Times](#), Lieu has introduced Senate Bill 1172, which would prohibit children under 18 from undergoing sexual-orientation change efforts (SOCE), and would even require adults seeking such treatment to sign a statement acknowledging that they have been told SOCE is “unlikely to be effective,” might be harmful, and is not recommended by mental health professionals.



But opponents of the legislation, which has already been approved by one California State Senate committee, argue that it denies parents the right to determine what is best for their children, and restricts the options of those who want help for same-sex attraction.

Lieu, in turn, is relying on background materials provided by the “gay” lobby, which insists that homosexual orientation is determined in a person at birth, rather than being a result of emotional or sexual abuse at an early age, which some major studies have demonstrated.

“Under the guise of a California license, some therapists are taking advantage of vulnerable people by pushing dangerous sexual orientation-change efforts,” Lieu declared via a press release. “These bogus efforts have led in some cases to patients later committing suicide, as well as severe mental and physical anguish. This is junk science and it must stop.”

Predictably, one of the main backers of Lieu’s bill is the homosexual activist group Equality California, whose spokesperson, Clarissa Filgioun, declared that “it’s long past time to do everything in our power to put an end to the use of therapy tactics that have no sound scientific basis and that cause lifelong damage.”

But the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), one of the leading groups defending reparative therapy, said that Lieu’s bill is rife with “misinformation,” and represents a serious threat to mental health and the rights of individuals and families.

In a [prepared statement on the bill](#), NARTH’s president, Dr. Christopher Rosik, pointed out a number of flaws in the bill. Rosik charged Lieu with relying on “unrealistically stringent methodological standards in dismissing the research on SOCE in order to make the blanket conclusion that it is not effective.” By the standards Lieu has set, Rosik wrote, “it is quite conceivable that other approaches to psychotherapy currently in practice could be considered ineffective and potentially harmful. Does the committee really



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wish to become an arbitrator of psychotherapeutic approaches?”

Rosik also pointed out that the proposed measure “would restrict the rights of parents to determine the appropriate psychological care for their minor child and hinder adult clients’ ability to make informed choices regarding their preferred therapeutic approach.” Additionally, Rosik charged Lieu with attempting to usurp “the role of mental health organizations and licensing boards to provide oversight in psychological care.”

Taking aim at the homosexual activist network, which has spent years embracing doubtful (and downright phony) research supposedly showing the immutability of homosexual tendencies, Rosik noted that the fact “this legislation is solely directed at SOCE should be a red flag suggesting that ideological and political motivations may motivate backers of this legislation as much as any concern for consumers derived from the relevant science.” Added Rosik: “It appears that those opposed to the ethical and professional provision of SOCE, having been unable to impose their will on professional organizations and licensing boards, are now attempting an end around power grab through the legislative process.”

NARTH concluded that “S.B. 1172 would make for bad law based on its misrepresentation of the science pertaining to SOCE, its potential to unnecessarily restrict client and parental choices, and its assumption of the regulatory functions of mental health associations and licensing boards.”

In addition to Rosik’s statement, David Pruden, a NARTH vice president, addressed the charge that many who practice reparative therapy are not trained mental health professionals. “Our people are ethical, licensed, responsible members of their professional associations,” Pruden said of NARTH-endorsed therapists. “They are not people out on the fringes doing nutty kinds of things.... They’ve practiced quietly and successfully for years, with no problems and no ethical complaints.”

Joining the voices of opposition to the bill was Brad Dacus of the conservative [Pacific Justice Institute](#) (PJI), who called S.B. 1172 “one of the most outrageous, speech-chilling bills we have ever seen in California — and that’s saying a lot.” Dacus told [OneNewsNow.com](#) that the proposed law “not only gives stark penalties and liabilities against counselors and psychologists attempting to assist adults wanting or asking for therapy regarding sexual orientation issues, but it outright bans and prohibits anyone under the age of 18 to have any pro-heterosexual counseling or therapy when they are struggling with their sexual orientation.”

He warned that to make matters worse, “if parents are caught being non-supportive of their child’s perception of homosexuality in any way, then that is deemed abuse by parents under this statute and grounds for the government to permanently take that child from their parents.”

PJI attorney Matthew McReynolds, who testified at a Senate committee hearing on the bill, noted that S.B. 1172 “blames those who believe change is possible for gay suicides, guilt, substance abuse, relationship problems, and a host of other ills. As if all that were not enough, the bill claims that sexually-confused youth who experience ‘family rejection ... face especially serious health risks’ and the state has a ‘compelling interest’ to protect their health. The logical implication from these two assertions is that the state is giving itself the power to take kids away from parents who do not affirm the kids’ sexual confusion.”

In a follow-up letter to the Senate committee, McReynolds noted that the bill is a direct challenge to the First Amendment. “S.B. 1172 is blatantly unconstitutional,” he wrote, adding, “We absolutely cannot allow the government to step into the counseling room or doctor’s office and clamp a hand over the mouth of a professional who is asked by a patient for help with sexual identity issues. Have our



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legislators completely forgotten the First Amendment? Or the right to privacy?"

An analysis of the bill by the PJI also noted the conspicuous absence of counseling related to sex-change procedures, "because backers believe gender is changeable, but sexual orientation is not." Added the PJI analysis: "The compelled speech and speech restrictions in S.B. 1172 are so extraordinary that even the California Psychological Association — which normally embraces LGBT rights — is opposed to the bill in its current form."

Writing on Focus on the Family's [CitizenLink](#) website, Jeff Johnston explained that he is a walking example of the success of the therapy S.B. 1172 would ban or restrict. "Twenty-five years ago I was living in California and looking for help with same-sex attractions," recalled Johnston. "My motivation wasn't self-hatred or pressure from a 'hetero-normative' society. I believed what the Bible says and the church teaches: God made sexual expression for marriage between a man and a woman. I knew there were grave health risks to homosexual sex, and I wanted a family." Johnston emphasized that counseling "was a huge help to me on [my journey out of homosexuality](#); now I'm happily married, with three terrific sons. My marriage and children would not exist without the help and support of [Christian therapists](#)."

*Photo of State Senator Ted Lieu: AP Images*



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