



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 15, 2014

Illinois Rejects Ban on Therapy for Same-sex Attraction

The Illinois House of Representatives has rejected a bill that would have banned reparative therapy for youth struggling with same-sex attraction. The measure, which was shot down on a 51-44 roll call vote, was sponsored by Democratic Chicago Representative Kelly Cassidy, who told her colleagues that the therapy was humiliating and abusive to lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual (LGTB) teens.



“This treatment plan causes depression, causes suicidal actions, and is incredibly harmful to children,” said the openly lesbian Cassidy, who was also one of the main legislative champions of Illinois’ homosexual marriage law. She claimed that the “practice of conversion therapy is dismissed by every major scientific organization and should not be utilized. There’s not a single scientific basis for one’s sex orientation being a disorder. We need to protect our children.”

House Bill 5569, also known as the Youth Mental Health Protection Act, states that “being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not a disease, disorder, illness, deficiency, or shortcoming. Illinois has a compelling interest in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, and in protecting its minors against exposure to serious harms caused by sexual orientation change efforts.”

The legislation then goes on to mandate: “Any sexual orientation change efforts attempted on a person under the age of 18 by a mental health provider or any referral made by a mental health provider to a third party practicing sexual orientation change efforts shall be considered unprofessional conduct.”

Before the vote Cassidy told CBS News that her bill simply codified “the positions of every major mental health profession’s organization,” giving “the Department of Professional Regulation the tools they need to protect the victims that I have heard from who have been horribly, horribly humiliated and abused.”

Among the leveler heads prevailing to vote down the bill was Republican Representative Jeanne Ives, who insisted that the legislature had no role in regulating such therapy. “This is stuff that we should not be legislating on at all,” she said. “We have no purview in this department. We have no expertise in this department. It’s absolutely something that should not ever be legislated on. Let people decide for themselves what they need to have for themselves.”

In 2012, [California passed the first state law](#) banning counselors from offering therapy for teens with same-sex attraction problems. And in August of last year, Republican Governor Chris Christie followed California Governor Jerry Brown’s lead by signing a law [banning such therapy in New Jersey](#). Christie justified his signature by deferring to the American Psychological Association (APA), which insisted its research showed that “conversion” or “reparative” therapy could lead teens struggling with homosexual feelings into “depression, substance abuse, social withdrawal, decreased self-esteem, and suicidal thoughts.”

While voicing his supposed concern “about government limiting parental choice on the care and treatment of their own children,” Christie nonetheless said that he believed “exposing children to these



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health risks without clear evidence of benefits that outweigh these serious risks is not appropriate. Based upon this analysis, I sign this bill into law.”

Speaking of the New Jersey law, Matt Staver of the conservative legal advocacy group Liberty Counsel said that banning therapy for teens and their families wishing to deal with same-sex attraction amounts to a “slippery slope of government infringing upon the First Amendment [guarantees] of counselors to provide, and patients to receive, counseling consistent with their religious beliefs.”



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