



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on May 11, 2012

## Could California Parents' Lose Rights to Help Homosexual Children?

The California Legislature is pushing through a law which would make it illegal for therapists, counselors, psychologists or parents to engage in any "sexual orientation change efforts" against minor children. [Senate Bill 1172](#) could subject offenders to fine, arrest and even jail. The bill passed out of committee on May 8th by a 5 to 3 vote. The language of the proposal extends to adults as well, requiring that an adult patient sign a consent form before seeking therapy or counseling to change their sexual orientation.



Brad Dacus (pictured above), who is president of the Pacific Justice Institute, has stated that if Senate Bill 1172 becomes law that his organization will challenge its constitutionality. Dacus said further:

This legislation is a grotesque violation of the rights of parents over their children. It specifically prohibits any child under the age of eighteen who struggles with homosexuality from getting any professional counseling at all. In fact, it also subjects parents to possibly having their children permanently removed from them if it is found that the parents were not accepting of a child's perception of being homosexual and the parents want the child to get counseling. If the parents are not totally accepting of this sexual orientation, then that is deemed abuse and gives the government grounds to permanently take the child from the parents.

Peter Sprigg, a senior fellow at the Family Research Council, noted:

The statutory ban on types of therapy is not the venue and there is very little precedent in state law to make an outright ban on a specific type of therapy. The fact that this bill is opposed by many of the professional organizations that normally are quite liberal on homosexuality, I think, indicates how extreme this legislation is. It really flies in the face of a fundamental ethical principle within the counseling profession, which is — the autonomy of the client in determining the goals for treatment. In any other context, other than homosexuality, that principle would be considered sacrosanct. But somehow these state legislators feel that they can run roughshod over it when it comes to people who experience unwanted same-sex attractions.

The FRC advised its members: "The California Association of Marriage and Family, an independent network of 30,000 marriage and family therapists, have rejected this political power grab. Gay clients have a right to receive the treatment of their choosing and therapists have a right to provide it without government harassment."

Peter LaBarbera, who is executive director of Americans for Truth About Homosexuality observed:

Not all ex-gays go through reparative therapy. There are many people who have a religious experience, they change through Christ. This is not the only way that people change. But this is a way that some people have found help. And it's an outrage that California is now stepping in and



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making it more and more difficult to get this help.

State Senator Ted Lieu, the sponsor of Senate Bill 1172, argues that the therapy provided is dangerous to patients because it pushes “vulnerable people” into therapy and which describes this sort of therapy as:

These bogus efforts have led in some cases to patients committing suicide, as well as server mental and physical anguish. This is junk science and it must stop.

The National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) has observed that Senator Lieu cites only a single study which, of course, agrees with the direction of his bill. NARTH also suggests that this might discourage parents with homosexuality from getting therapy which could be needed to allow parents of children who decided that there were homosexual and did not wish to change to nevertheless feel loved and accepted by their parents.

NARTH President Christopher Rosik wrote that: “Mechanisms already exist within licensing boards and professional mental health organizations to address unethical behavior or malpractice by licensed clinicians. It is curious to us that the impediments and prohibitions SB 1172 places on consumers far exceed the cautions already put into place by the relevant professional associations, which again brings into question the objectivity of those who are lobbying for this bill.”

The Catholic Medical Association, a national organization whose membership includes a number of outstanding physicians, has also sent a letter to the California Senate Judiciary Committee warning that not only is the bill a fundamental infringement of the rights of patients but that it is also based upon flawed medical science and that it could easily do great harm to patients who otherwise sought treatment.

The bill seems part of a pattern lately in which people of faith who practice medicine are being compelled to act in ways contrary to their moral values. What would have been the reaction if parents or therapists were prohibited from trying to keep their children from using tobacco or drinking alcohol or using drugs? Therapy has been around for a long time and many Americans have considered many forms of therapy to be pretty silly. But they have not tried to make it illegal. SB 1172 is truly Orwellian and genuinely dangerous.



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