

Did a Gay Activist Lie to the New Jersey Senate?

There was one particular testimony before the New Jersey Senate detailing the dangers of “gay conversion therapy” that was so riveting, it sounded like something taken straight out of a Hollywood script. It now appears that it *was* taken straight out of Hollywood. So, not only is the New Jersey Senate in danger of passing a terribly unfair, discriminatory bill, but the most compelling testimony presented appears to be a fabrication.

Before getting into the details of what appears to be an incredible hoax, it’s important to understand the nature of this very dangerous bill, which would make it illegal for a licensed therapist to offer professional help to a minor with unwanted same-sex attractions, even if the minor had parental permission.

Yet if that minor wanted to find out how to embrace those same-sex attractions, or if that minor felt he was a boy trapped in a girl’s body and wanted to explore hormone therapy with a view toward sex-change surgery, that would be fine. But let that same young person say, “I’m troubled by my same-sex attractions and would like to explore the possibility of change,” and that would be illegal if this outrageous bill passes.

As I noted on June 1 with reference to a similar bill that was being considered in California (it passed, but is being held up due to legal appeals), “California Senator Ted Lieu, the author of the bill, removed any doubt as to why he introduced it: ‘The attack on parental rights is exactly the whole point of the bill because we don’t want to let parents harm their children.’”

This is a startling example of government overreach, not only between parents and their children but also between patient and client. As Carol Gallentine said to the Senate committee last week, "I don't understand who you people are, trying to come into our homes and tell us what to do with our children. I see you people bullying the parents."

Ironically, in schools all over America (including New Jersey), a girl who wants to come out as lesbian can be encouraged by public school counselors or teachers to join the school's Gay Straight Alliance. There, she will be encouraged not to tell her parents about her decision and not to listen to their religious viewpoints. But now, New Jersey is considering passing a bill that will make it illegal to offer professional help to a minor (even with parental permission) if that child doesn't want to embrace a gay identity.

Of course, the whole basis for this bill is the alleged harm done to minors who have been subjected to counseling for same-sex attractions, and the testimony offered by Brielle Goldani—born male but now identifying as female—offered poignant confirmation of these alleged abuses.

Goldani described how he/she was sent by his/her parents to a religious camp in Ohio called "True Directions," allegedly run by the Assemblies of God, a conservative Christian denomination. "Goldani told lawmakers she was given electric shocks and drugs to induce vomiting as part of the treatment."

Christopher Doyle, a professional counselor and himself a former homosexual (yes, these do exist, by the thousands), testified before the Senate against the bill, but he was deeply troubled by Goldani's story, prompting him to do further research. What he uncovered was that: 1) "According to the office of the Ohio secretary of state and attorney general, no such camp called True Directions has ever existed"; 2) the Assemblies of God, including the local church that allegedly sponsored the camp, never heard of it and would

never sanction such barbarous treatment; 3) licensed therapists in Ohio completely disavowed such treatments.

So where did Goldani's horror story come from? Doyle reports, "it came from a 1999 film titled *But I'm a Cheerleader*, starring RuPaul. In the film, the main character is suspected of being a lesbian by her family, who then proceeds to send her to a 'conversion therapy' camp called True Directions." Amazing!

Worse still, it appears that gays being sent to "True Directions" camp may be something of an urban gay myth. According to an email from a man struggling with his own homosexual desires, "I don't know why but it never occurred to me that many of these stories of barbaric gay to straight therapy might be fabrications. In particular, one I have heard about several times is a camp called True Directions in Ohio."

What then are the facts? First, even if such barbaric treatments did take place, there is not a licensed therapist in America who engages in them. What then was the relevance of this (apparently fabricated) testimony? Absolutely none.

Second, contrary to popular perception, a task force for the American Psychological Association did not find sexual orientation change therapy dangerous. Rather, it claimed that "there is insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation," quite an understated conclusion when you realize that every member of the task force was either gay or radically pro-gay. (For detailed documentation of this, see *A Queer Thing Happened to America*.)

Third, with every counseling intervention, be it for obesity or depression or alcoholism or unwanted same-sex attractions, some have a positive outcome, some see no change and some report harm. In fact, gay psychologist Richard Isay describes how one married man whom he was helping to become gay

committed suicide (see his book, *Becoming Gay*).

Fourth, there are numerous documented testimonies and personal stories of men and women benefiting from the very counseling New Jersey wants to ban.

Fifth, according to the most recent report from the Centers for Disease Control, homosexual sex continues to be extremely risky, yet the New Jersey Senate is considering outlawing a counseling intervention that could help steer an individual away from such unsafe sex.

People of New Jersey, will you stand for this outrage or will you speak up?

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