

Ex-Gays Sound the Alarm Over California's Dangerous New Bill

A group of former homosexuals and ministry leaders rallied on the steps of a California courthouse Tuesday to protest a bill that threatens to ban Christian books and resources which address issues of homosexuality and gender identity.

If passed, AB2943 will criminalize "sexual orientation change efforts" by making it illegal to distribute resources, sell books, offer counseling services or direct someone to a biblically-based model for getting help with gender confusion and homosexuality.

In contrast, the bill supports counseling that offers encouragement towards "exploration and development" of same-sex attractions.

The bill's supporters believe the bill will protect the LGBT community, but former homosexual and Pulse Nightclub shooting survivor Luis Ruiz said he needed the church the most during the lowest point of his life.

"The Pulse Nightclub shooting was a very tragic event and I lost many church came in and prayed with me. They came in and showed me Scriptures through the word of God. I was able to not only just be free of the lifestyle, but be free of me in general—from every type of sin, and I don't feel that someone should dictate and tell me that I can't go seek help for any of that. And I think we should vote 'no,'" he told the crowd doing Tuesday's rally.

Now, Ruiz says he is no longer gay, and points everyone, homosexual or not, to Jesus.

"A lot of us standing here today can speak of the freedom of Jesus and the love we have towards him that will set you free completely," he shared.

Pro golfer Kris Olsen criticized the bill for making it illegal for former homosexuals like her to freely seek counseling.

"AB2943 violates my right to choose." she said. "It is a blatant violation of my first amendment rights, and I believe there's a reason why our Founding Father chose to put these rights in the very first amendment."

Olsen struggled with same-sex attractions as a Christian, but sought help from the very services AB2943 seeks to ban.

"I fell into the world of I found help—a faith-based group of people like me who wanted their feelings to come into alignment with their faith ... It was the beginning of the freedom that I stand before you with today," Olsen explained. "I am now free from my former feelings of same-sex attraction and lesbian behavior that warred in my soul."

The rally was organized by Church United and the Catholic Diocese of Orange County. Jim Domen, who pastors Church United, is also a former homosexual who believes AB2943 discriminates against people like him.

"Today is about preserving freedom in America for any person," he explained. "This is about protecting people's individual rights to pursue what they feel brings them true freedom"

AB2943 was approved on the floor last month. The bill now goes to the state Senate for a vote. {eoa}

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