

Liberty Counsel: ‘Thank God’ for the Death of Gender Identity Bill

Liberty Counsel celebrates that the death of dangerous California AB 2943 bill. This horrendous bill would have established government-enforced censorship of counselors who wanted to provide and consenting adults who wanted to receive talk therapy for unwanted same-sex attractions, behavior or gender confusion.

It also tried to ban sales of printed materials and books expressing the viewpoint that unwanted same-sex attractions or gender confusion can be reduced or eliminated.

The author of the bill, assembly member Evan Low, withdrew AB 2943, today being the last day of the legislative session. Low said: “I knew this was an emotionally charged issue, so I spent the past few months traveling up and down the state meeting with a wide variety of faith leaders.”

“The dangerous bill that would ban counsel and even portions of the Bible is dead,” said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel.

Adults with unwanted same-sex attractions or who struggle with unwanted gender behaviors or confusion may continue to receive counsel in California. Victims of sexual abuse can continue to choose professional counseling help if they develop (as often happens) unwanted urges to engage in same-sex behavior or if they become gender confused and want to explore the possibility of change.

AB 2943 was not in the best interest of counseling clients and was ideologically driven. If the bill had passed, Liberty Counsel was prepared to file a lawsuit regarding its

significant constitutional violations.

“Our lawsuit was ready to file. We were prepared to challenge this unconstitutional and dangerous bill if it passed. Thank God, this bill is now dead.”

This bill could have been used to ban the Bible, which directs people to trust in Jesus Christ to help them overcome unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion. Even a reference to portions of Scripture could be banned if used to support or promote change.

For example, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (ESV) specifically refers to “men who practice homosexuality,” and then states, “such were some of you,” clearly indicating that through a relationship with Jesus Christ there is hope for change in this area and every other area that conflicts with God’s design for each person.

Liberty Counsel’s client, Christopher H. Rosik, Ph.D. has been a licensed clinical psychologist practicing in Fresno, California for 30 years. He is also a professor at Fresno Pacific University and has published his views on same-sex attraction and the Christian faith in more than 50 books or peer-reviewed journals. Approximately 10 percent of his clients struggle with same-sex attractions, and they often complain of conflict or dissonance between their same-sex attractions or behaviors and their moral or religious beliefs.

Dr. Rosik’s experience demonstrates that sharing his faith-based worldview, along with mainstream psychological talk therapies, can be effective. Some of his clients specifically sought out a therapist who is a member of their faith community because they believe their values regarding same-sex attractions and behaviors will be respected and not labeled as “homophobic” or otherwise misguided or maligned. Now Dr. Rosik can continue to share his professional views that his clients want to hear without fear of punishment.

"I am glad that California legislators recognize the many people, including our Liberty Counsel clients, have personal experience with changing their unwanted same-sex attraction and others who have professionally helped their clients to change, reduce, or eliminate same-sex attractions," Staver says. "It is not the role of the government to intrude into the counseling clinic and dictate what a client should want."

"AB 2943 tried to control the private conversation between counselor and client, yet the implications of it reach far beyond silencing certain counseling. This bill substituted the government's whim for personal choice. It sought to silence and censor the Bible's message of hope and change regarding unwanted same-sex attraction. It was best that the California legislature defeated this blatantly unconstitutional assault on free speech and the freedom to choose counseling that will help people in need."

Liberty Counsel also represents Walter Heyer, who provides products and services to residents in California via a website, telephone communications, and conferences or seminars. Heyer struggled with gender confusion and had "gender reassignment" surgery at the recommendation of Paul Walker, Ph.D., the chairman of the committee that drafted the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care and who served as the founding president for the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association from 1979-1981, now referred to as the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.

Heyer later became a Christian. He greatly benefited from counseling, and his gender dysphoria is resolved. Now he embraces that God created him as a biological man, and he provides advice and resources to people struggling with gender dysphoria. Heyer has written several books which address gender dysphoria and dissociative disorders from a faith perspective, speaks at conferences, and has thousands of visitors to his website, including many from California. This bill would have subjected him to potential liability for

merely speaking, writing or otherwise advising Californians who seek his advice about gender dysphoria to help themselves or family members.

In addition to banning therapeutic counseling regarding unwanted same-sex attractions or gender confusion, this bill tried to make “advertising, offering to engage in or engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with an individual” a fraudulent business practice. This bill was written with such broad and ambiguous language that it would have been impossible for Dr. Rosik and his clients to determine whether their conversation or language during counseling sessions is illegal.

In addition, Liberty Counsel represents Alliance for Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity, a nonprofit professional organization that provides referrals, sponsors conferences, publishes peer-reviewed research and offers scholarships to students. It also represents the American College of Pediatricians, a national organization of pediatricians and other health care professionals dedicated to the health and well-being of children, including those in California.

Denise Shick, another client of Liberty Counsel, is an ordained minister with degrees in psychology and community and human services and has written several books. Shick is founder and executive director of Help 4 Families, a Christian ministry that compassionately provides emotional and spiritual support for family members, including those in California, of loved ones dealing with gender confusion. Help 4 Families offers prayer, spiritual counseling, resource materials, seminars, retreats and referrals for professional counseling.

This California bill ignored studies, including the Effects of Therapy on Religious Men Who Have Unwanted Same-Sex Attraction, that confirm that talk therapy is quite effective. This particular study shows the overwhelming effectiveness of

people receiving counseling to reduce or eliminate their unwanted same-sex attractions, behaviors or identity.

More than two-thirds of those who participated had significant heterosexual shifts in sexual attraction, sexual identity and behavior. They also experienced moderate-to-marked decreases in suicidality, depression, substance abuse and increases in social functioning and self-esteem.

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