

Pedophiles Deserve Civil Rights, Argues 'NY Times' Op-Ed

What was it that someone said about the slippery slope of special rights for the LGBTIQ community? Well, the cry for civil rights for pedophiles is now official.

Margo Kaplan, who teaches law at Rutgers University, used *The New York Times* as a platform to opine about the stigma pedophilia carries. The stigma, she laments, makes it difficult for adults with sexual attractions to children to get help.

Pointing to uncited research, Kaplan argues that pedophilia is not a choice but a mental disorder that may have neurological origins, sort of like being left-handed. She also bemoans that our current law is “inconsistent and irrational” in dealing with pedophiles. When it comes to public policies that might help people with pedophilia come forward and seek treatment before they offend, she is troubled that the law omits pedophilia from protection.

“The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination against otherwise qualified individuals with mental disabilities, in areas such as employment, education and medical care. Congress, however, explicitly excluded pedophilia from protection under these two crucial laws,” she writes.

“It’s time to revisit these categorical exclusions,” Kaplan continues. “Without legal protection, a pedophile cannot risk seeking treatment or disclosing his status to anyone for support. He could lose his job, and future job prospects, if he is seen at a group-therapy session, asks for a reasonable

accommodation to take medication or see a psychiatrist, or requests a limit in his interaction with children. Isolating individuals from appropriate employment and treatment only increases their risk of committing a crime.”

This is simply not true, and you don’t even have to read between the lines to see the message she’s sending: If we don’t give pedophiles special rights, it’s on us when they abuse children.

The truth is psychiatrists are not always obligated to report people who admit struggling with attraction to children to legal authorities. Typically therapists are only required to report the pedophile if they have children or provide care to children and if no crime has occurred the pedophile will receive help, rather than arrest. The truth is our laws are not isolating individuals from appropriate employment and treatment and thereby increasing their risk of committing a crime. In fact, Kaplan contradicts her own point by describing a web site called Virtuous Pedophiles that offers support to pedophiles who don’t molest children and believe sex with children is wrong. Clearly, there is support for people struggling with these immoral attractions. Should there be more? Yes, but that doesn’t mean we need to include protections for pedophiles in the ADA.

“A pedophile should be held responsible for his conduct—but not for the underlying attraction. Arguing for the rights of scorned and misunderstood groups is never popular, particularly when they are associated with real harm,” Kaplan writes. “Acknowledging that pedophiles have a mental disorder, and removing the obstacles to their coming forward and seeking help, is not only the right thing to do, but it would also advance efforts to protect children from harm.”

These are ridiculous statements. Kaplan paints pedophiles as victims, classifying them as scorned and misunderstood. The bottom line is that if pedophiles know that having sex with

children is wrong, then they shouldn't do it, and there's nothing stopping them from seeking therapy. If pedophiles are having sex with children and they think it's OK, they should be removed from society for committing such heinous crimes.

I'm certainly not against mental-health treatment for pedophiles before or after they act on these urges, but including pedophilia as part of the Americans With Disabilities Act is not going to solve the problem. And, Ms. Kaplan, having sex with children is certainly a choice. No one is forcing pedophiles to molest children—and no one is stopping people who struggle with the urge to molest children from seeking mental-health treatment, either. By all means, let's help pedophiles break free from these immoral attractions, but let's not change laws in the process.

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