

AIDS Expert Fired for Testifying Gay Sex Is Harmful to Public Health

He's a pioneer in the realm of clinical infectious diseases in the Caribbean. And now he's under fire for testifying that homosexual intercourse is dangerous to those who practice it—and to public health in general.

Professor Brendan Bain, a practicing Christian who serves to treat AIDS patients, was the director of the regional coordinating unit of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training Network (CHART) at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, until his anti-gay sex comments caught up with him.

Bain was fired in the wake of fallout related to his testimony on behalf of a group of churches working to keep Belize's sodomy law in place in 2012. It took two years, but now he's paying the price for his beliefs.

Bain's testimony was based on his research, which shows the relative risk of contracting HIV is significantly higher among men who have sex with other men (MSM) in Belize than in the general population. His research concludes the same truth in several other countries for which data is available, including countries that have repealed the law that criminalizes anal sex and countries where the law still applies.

"The issue in question arose about two years ago in a high-profile case in Belize in which Caleb Orozco, a gay man in Belize, challenged the constitutionality of an 1861 law that criminalizes men having sex with men," the university said in a statement.

"Professor Brendan Bain provided a statement on behalf of a group of churches seeking to retain the 1861 law," the

statement continues. "Many authorities familiar with the brief presented believe that professor Bain's testimony supported arguments for retention of the law, thereby contributing to the continued criminalization and stigmatization of MSM. This opinion is shared by the lesbian, gay and other groups who are served by CHART.

"The majority of HIV and public health experts believe that criminalizing men having sex with men and discriminating against them violates their human rights, puts them at even higher risk, reduces their access to services, forces the HIV epidemic underground thereby increasing the HIV risk. These are the positions advocated by the UN, UNAIDS, WHO, PAHO, the international human rights communities and PANCAP (The Pan Caribbean Partnership against AIDS), which is the organization leading the regional response to the HIV epidemic.

"While the university recognizes the right of professor Bain to provide expert testimony in the manner he did, it has become increasingly evident that Professor Bain has lost the confidence and support of a significant sector of the community which the CHART program is expected to reach, including the loss of his leadership status in PANCAP, thereby undermining the ability of this program, to effectively deliver on its mandate. It is for this reason that the University of the West Indies has decided to terminate the contract of Professor Bain as Director of the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) of the Caribbean HIV/Training (CHART) Network."