

Conversion Therapy Ban Decision Imminent in Calif.

Liberty Counsel on Friday will challenge a California law that bans any counseling to diminish or eliminate same-sex sexual attractions. Liberty Counsel represents several parents and their children who are receiving and benefiting from such counseling, several licensed counselors who provide such counsel, the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), and the American Association for Christian Counselors (AACC), an organization with about 50,000 professional counseling members.

The change therapy law violates the right to free speech and religious liberty, Liberty Counsel argues. The organization says clients have the right to receive information that aligns with their values, and counselors have the right and the duty to provide information to help clients in pursuit of their right to self-determination.

“The California governor and legislature put their own preconceived notions and political ideology ahead of children and their right to receive counseling that aligns with their spiritual values and emotional needs,” said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. “A number of minors who have struggled with **same-sex attraction** have been able to reduce or eliminate the stress and conflicts in their lives by receiving counseling that best meets their needs and religious convictions.

“Banning **change therapy** harms children, stresses families, and places counselors in a catch-22, because they will be forced to violate their licensing ethical codes,” Staver added. “This law forces counselors to overrule their clients who choose to prioritize their religious or moral values above unwanted same-sex sexual attractions.

"The change therapy law is an astounding violation of the right to free speech and religious liberty," he continued. "Clients have the right to receive information that aligns with their values, and counselors have the right and the duty to provide information to help the clients in pursuit of their right to self-determination.

"Under SB 1172, a young boy sexually molested by the likes of a Jerry Sandusky who develops an identity crisis, emotional stress, and who begins to experience unwanted same-sex attractions will be further hurt by a law that deprives him and his family of the option of receiving counsel that aligns with their religious and moral beliefs.

"The issue is not a battle of experts, and, if it were, California's experts woefully failed to justify such an intrusive law. This issue is the state injecting itself between the counselor and the client and forcing the client to receive only one viewpoint on same-sex attractions. California has no compelling or empirical reason to justify SB 1172. This law is politically, not scientifically, motivated," Staver concluded.

The law goes into effect on Jan. 1, just over a month from now. The hearing in federal court will consider Liberty Counsel's request for a preliminary injunction to block the law.