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Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
A 3977 (Glick)/S 263 (Hoyleman)
2017

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to prohibiting mental health professionals from engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with a patient under the age of eighteen years and expanding the definition of professional misconduct with respect to mental health professionals

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality from its list of diseases, and, two years later, went on record stating that homosexuality implies no shortcomings in stability, judgment, reliability, or general capabilities.¹ Homosexuality is in no way a disorder in need of treatment or a cure, and mental health professionals who persist in approaching it in such a way can cause severe emotional and mental damage to their patients.

A study published in 2009, in "Pediatrics," the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, found that adolescents who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), and who had faced high rates of family rejection, were not only 5.9 times more likely to suffer from severe depression than LGBT youths who faced little to no family rejection, they were also 8.4 times more likely to have attempted suicide.²

Conversion therapy is an extreme example of the type of prejudice and discrimination that can cause irreparable emotional and mental trauma to LGBT individuals, thus making it enormously dangerous to subject adolescents to this type of program. Not only is there no scientific evidence to suggest that these programs can be successful, there is ample evidence showing that a person's sexual orientation cannot be changed, and the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry has stated that it is very likely that these attempts will cause significant harm and increase feelings of isolation and suicidal ideation.³

Given the fact that the practice of conversion therapy is based in the discriminatory fiction that homosexuality is a disease, and that there is a clear body of evidence that shows such attitudes and behaviors are directly harmful to LGBT adolescents, FPA strongly believes that this legislation, which would prohibit mental health professionals from engaging minor patients in conversion therapy, is vitally important to the health and well-being of LGBT adolescents.

PPESA encourages the legislature to support this legislation.

¹http://www.jmu.edu/safezone/wm_library/APA%20Policy%20Statements%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

²<http://www.healthandlearning.org/documents/FamilyRejectionasaPredictorofNegativeHealthOutcomesinWhiteandLatinoLesbianGayandBisexualYoun.pdf>

³<http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>