

To: Assembly Member Mark Stone, Chair  
Committee on Judiciary, California State Assembly

June 17, 2019

Re: Assembly Concurrent Resolution 99 (Low) – OPPOSE

Dear Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of Family Research Council, I urge you to oppose Assembly Concurrent Resolution 99, which condemns voluntary, client-centered therapy to help an individual with unwanted same-sex attractions or gender dysphoria overcome those conditions (so-called “conversion therapy”).

The resolution’s sponsor, Assembly Member Evan Low, acted wisely last year in withdrawing Assembly Bill 2943, which would have declared it “consumer fraud” for anyone to accept compensation for engaging in such therapy. We are grateful that Mr. Low listened to the concerns of religious leaders up and down the state who expressed grave concern about the threats to personal and religious liberty that such legislation would pose.

However, A.C.R. 99 is premised upon the same mistaken characterization of sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) as A.B. 2943. It is simply false to assert, as the resolution does, that such therapy is always or generally “ineffective, unethical, and harmful.” On the contrary, the American Psychological Association has never declared such therapy to be unethical;<sup>1</sup> and the APA’s 2009 *Task Force Report* on the subject acknowledged that there was *no* “valid causal evidence” of harm.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, there is an abundance of evidence that sexual orientation can change over time, including four large, population-based, longitudinal analyses.<sup>3</sup> While those analyses did not focus specifically on intentional change efforts, six recent studies (five of them peer-reviewed) have shown that such therapy can be effective and is not generally harmful.<sup>4</sup>

Family Research Council strongly opposes A.C.R. 99 and we urge you to vote against passing this resolution out of the Committee on Judiciary.

Sincerely,

Peter Sprigg  
Senior Fellow for Policy Studies  
Family Research Council

---

<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of sexual orientation change efforts or “conversion therapy” in the APA’s 20-page code of ethics. See: American Psychological Association, *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, January 1, 2017); online at: <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/ethics-code-2017.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, August 2009), 42, <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/therapeutic-response.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Summarized in: Peter Sprigg, “Evidence Shows Sexual Orientation Can Change: Debunking the Myth of ‘Immutability,’” *Issue Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Family Research Council, March 2019); online at: <https://www.frc.org/sexualorientation>.

<sup>4</sup> See: Peter Sprigg, “Are Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) Effective? Are They Harmful? What the Evidence Shows,” *Issue Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Family Research Council, September 2018); online at: <https://www.frc.org/issueanalysis/are-sexual-orientation-change-efforts-soce-effective-are-they-harmful-what-the-evidence-shows>.