
Senate Bill 201

Enacts provisions relating to conversion therapies

REMARKS BY

SENATOR DAVID R. PARKS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, LABOR AND ENERGY

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Good morning, Chair Atkinson and Committee Members. For the record, I am David Parks, representing Senate District No. 7. Thank you for hearing SB 201.

SB 201 prohibits "conversion therapy " for minors. Conversion therapy, sometimes referred to as "reparative therapy," is a range of treatments that aim to change someone's sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual, as well as change someone's gender identity.

Conversion therapy is a dangerous, unscientific and unethical practice based on the premise that people can change their sexual orientation or gender identity. Conversion therapy has been discredited by virtually all major American medical, psychiatric, psychological and professional counseling organizations.

People who have undergone conversion therapy have reported increased anxiety, depression, helplessness, hopelessness, social withdrawal, self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse and in some cases committing suicide. The devastating consequences of conversion therapy are well documented.

This proposed legislation states that a mental health provider may not seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity if that person is under the age of 18. This includes efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions, or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward other individuals.

Leading medical and mental health experts from across the country and around the world have all condemned conversion therapy. However, this treatment continues to be practiced.

At this point, the medical establishment agrees that conversion therapy does not work, and can be abusive. Conversion therapy has been regarded as harmful by the following organizations:

American Psychological Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Medical Association's Council on Scientific Affairs

American Academy of Pediatrics

The Governing Council of the American Counseling Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

National Association of Social Workers

American School Counselor Association and

Pan American Health Organization.

The states of California, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont and Washington, D.C. have already enacted laws protecting LGBTQ youth from conversion therapy, and more than a dozen other states have introduced similar legislation.

This bill was previously introduced in the 2015 legislative session. That bill number was SB 353. It passed this committee as well as the full Senate; however, it never got a hearing in the Assembly.

That concludes my presentation, Mr. Chair. I am happy to answer any questions you or the Committee might have. There are a number of individuals both here in Carson City and in Southern Nevada who would like to testify in support of SB 201.

Thank you.