



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Senator Hoylman, Senator Gianaris & Assembly Member Glick Renew Call for Ban on So-Called ‘Gay Cures’ for Kids

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL August 21, 2013

New York, NY (August 20, 2013) – In the wake of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie’s signing of legislation prohibiting state-licensed mental health professionals from practicing sexual orientation change efforts on minors, also known as “conversion therapy,” New York State Senator Brad Hoylman (D, WFP – Manhattan), State Senator Michael Gianaris (D – Manhattan) and State Assembly Member Deborah Glick (D – Manhattan), who are carrying similar legislation (S.4917/A.6983) in New York, released the following statements:

Senator Hoylman said:

“Conversion therapy is among the worst frauds in history and has been discredited by the American Psychological Association and other leading mental health organizations.

“Like the New Jersey law, our legislation relates only to minors. Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are five times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual kids. The last thing these kids need is to have professional counselors telling them to change who they are. New York State must get out of the business of sanctioning this attack on our children. I urge my colleagues in the Legislature to follow New Jersey’s lead and pass our bill as soon as session resumes in January.”

Senator Gianaris said:

"It is past time for New York to join California and New Jersey in protecting our LGBT youth from the ignorant pseudo-science of conversion therapy. New York has a proud history of leadership on LGBT issues and it is time to send the nation a message that young people need to be protected from gay conversion therapy, a practice based not on science but on intolerance."

Assembly Member Glick said:

"For too long, misguided parents have been led astray by unscrupulous practitioners, who promise them that their LGBT children can be "converted" to heterosexuality through counseling. Aside from being a totally discredited practice, the damage inflicted by some of the most dreadful methods utilized, including administering pain upon viewing LGBT people kissing each other, hurts the very young people their parents want to protect.

"New York State cannot continue to permit these individual professionals to perpetrate a fraud on the public, especially when the psyches of youngsters hang in the balance. We continue to see terrible instances of bullying and gay bashing among young people, with homophobic epithets at the top of the list of slurs hurled. Conversion therapy adds to a hostile environment for young LGBT people and it must be banned."

A constituent, Dean Dafis, who had been subjected to conversion therapy, brought the issue to Senator Hoylman's attention. Mr. Dafis referred Hoylman to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which has been active in fighting conversion therapy across the country.

SPLC identifies two conversion therapy providers in New York State: Emmaus Road

Counseling, where Linda Schmidt, a New York State-licensed social worker, offers her services on “same-sex attraction and lesbian issues,” and Christian Counseling Center, where Melissa Ingraham, who is a New York State-licensed Mental Health Counselor, helps adolescents “dealing with...sexual identity issues.”