



April 2, 2018

Honorable Evan Low
Chair, Assembly Business and Professions Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 383
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1779 (Nazarian) Sexual orientation: change efforts
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Chair Low,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA), representing over 5,000 California pediatricians, supports AB 1779 (Nazarian), which would expand the sexual orientation change therapy ban protection to individuals whose legal rights are limited by their disabilities and are under conservatorships or guardianship.

Sexual orientation change therapy, sometimes called reparative therapy, conversion therapy or reorientation therapy, is an attempt to change the sexual orientation of a person from homosexual or bisexual to heterosexual. The American Academy of Pediatrics endorses the American Psychological Association publication “Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation and Youth: A Primer for Principals Educators, and School Personnel, ” which states that “...counseling and psychotherapy aimed at eliminating or suppressing homosexuality... are based on a view of homosexuality that has been rejected by all the major mental health professions.” Further, the American Academy of Pediatrics advises youth to “...avoid any treatments that claim to be able to change a person’s sexual orientation, or treatment ideas that see homosexuality as a sickness.”

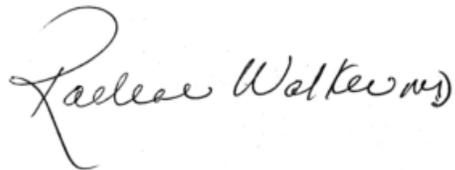
The potential risks of reparative/conversion therapy are great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient. Many patients who have undergone reparative therapy relate that they were inaccurately told that homosexuals are lonely, unhappy individuals who never achieve acceptance or satisfaction. The possibility that the person might achieve happiness and satisfying interpersonal relationships as a gay man or lesbian is not presented, nor are alternative approaches to dealing with the effects of societal stigmatization discussed.

Currently, individuals under the age of 18 are protected from the harmful effects of sexual orientation change therapy. AB 1779 (Nazarian) would close a loophole in current law to expand the protection of another vulnerable population of Californians from the harmful effects of sexual orientation change therapy. Individuals whose legal rights are limited by their disabilities and are under conservatorships or guardianships should receive the same protection from sexual orientation change therapy as underage individuals.

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 across the state urge you to vote AYE on AB 1779

(Nazarian). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raelene Walker, M.D." The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Raelene Walker, M.D., Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Executive Board Member, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: Assembly Business and Professions Committee Members
Office of Honorable Adrin Nazarian, California State Assembly (Author)
AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne