

Mental Health Organizations Support SB 111/HB 217

Protect LGBT Youth in Illinois by Banning Sexual Orientation Change Efforts

We, the undersigned professional mental health, medical and academic organizations, strongly support the Illinois Conversion Therapy Prohibition Act - Senate Bill 111 and House Bill 217. The Act protects the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth from harmful and ineffective sexual orientation change efforts, which are also referred to as conversion therapy.

Our position is guided by scientific evidence and an adherence to the medical dictum to “First, do no harm.”

To justify sexual orientation change efforts, conversion therapists define homosexuality as a sickness or disorder requiring conversion therapy. However, sexual orientation and gender identity are not mental disorders or diseases, and, therefore, ethical mental health practitioners should not attempt to “cure” or “repair” LGBT people through the use of sexual orientation change efforts.

Efforts to “convert” or “repair” a LGBT person are based on theories with questionable scientific validity. In fact, over the last four decades, conversion therapists have not produced any rigorous scientific evidence to prove their claims of a cure. Instead, sexual orientation change efforts are often guided by forces opposed to civil rights for LGBT people.

Such bias against people based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity negatively affects the mental health of LGBT people. In fact, LGBT youth who experience rejection and social stigmatization are more likely to have high levels of depression, more likely to engage in substance abuse, and more likely to attempt suicide.

We firmly believe that ethical practitioners in Illinois should refrain from attempts to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

Furthermore, to protect the mental and physical health of LGBT youth, we strongly support and urge the Illinois General Assembly and Governor to approve the Conversion Therapy Prohibition Act – Senate Bill 111 and House Bill 217.

Sincerely,



Karla Steingraber, Psy.D
Acting President,

Illinois Psychological Association



Robert Garofalo, MD
Division Head
Adolescent Medicine,

Lurie Children's Hospital



Barbara Bayldon, MD
President,

Illinois Chapter, American Academy
of Pediatrics



Erica Schmidt, MSW
Director,

Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis



Joel Rubin
Executive Director,

National Association of Social
Workers- IL Chapter



Mark Smaller, PhD
President

American Psychoanalytic Association



James MacKenzie, DO
President,

Illinois Psychiatric Society



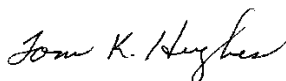
Ramon Gardenhire
Vice President,
Policy & Advocacy

AIDS Foundation of Chicago



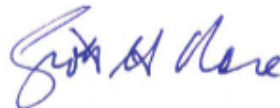
Raymond E. Crossman, PhD
President,

Adler University



Tom Hughes
Executive Director

Illinois Public Health Association



Scott Harms Rose, PhD
President & Dean,

The Institute for Clinical Social Work



Daniel Stasi
Executive Director,

Illinois Mental Health Counselors Association
Illinois School Counselor Association
Coalition of Illinois Counselors