



Memo of Support A.4958/S.121

The NYS AAP, representing more than 4,100 pediatricians across New York State, strongly supports A.6983B/S. 4917B which would protect lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender children and youth from the dangers of conversion therapy.

The American Psychological Association convened a Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation in 2009 which concluded that sexual orientation change efforts can pose critical health risks to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children and youth ranging from creating additional confusion and depression, to further contributing to substance abuse and suicide.

Being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is not a disease, disorder, illness, deficiency, or shortcoming. The major professional associations of mental health practitioners and child and adolescent development specialists in the United State have recognized this fact for nearly 40 years.

The American School Counselor Associations, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Counseling Association Governing Council, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Pan American Health Organization have all concluded that the risks of conversion therapy require that the profession reject such an approach. Minors who experience family rejection based on their sexual orientation need access to positive evidence based therapeutic approaches which can help them find inner strength and inner peace and their place in their communities. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young adults who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide, 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression, 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs, and 3.4 times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.

New York has an affirmative responsibility to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children and youth. This responsibility includes protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children and youth from the serious harms caused by misguided and non-scientific sexual orientation change efforts.

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