

Call Your Senator Today Regarding Legislation Prohibiting Conversion Therapy for Minors: Urge Bill Be Brought to the Senate Floor for a Vote before the end of session

With only three scheduled days left in the Legislative Session, it is imperative NASW-NYS members call and/or email their Senators **today** urging them to do two things: (1) support legislation (S.121) that would prohibit mental health professionals from engaging in efforts to change a minor's sexual orientation, so-called conversion therapy, as well as defining such efforts as professional misconduct; and, (2) urge Senate Majority Leader Flanagan to bring the bill to the floor for a vote before the end of the session.

Nearly every major medical and professional association has discredited and repudiated conversion therapy, including among others the American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychological Association, the National Association of Social Workers and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The legislation comports with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Policy Statement on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Issues and the NASW Policy Statement on Transgender and Gender Identity issues, that states:

“NASW supports the adoption of local, state, federal, and international policies and legislation that ban all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity” (NASW 2008), and further adds “NASW condemns the use of SOCE or so-called reparative therapy by any person identifying as a social worker or any agency that identifies as providing social work services. Public dollars should not be spent on programs that support SOCE” (NASW, 2014). The National Association of Social Workers reaffirms its stance against therapies and treatments designed to change sexual orientation or gender identity and against referring clients to practitioners or programs that claim to do so (NASW, 2014).”

NASW-NYS applauds the Governor's regulatory initiative earlier this year to: (1) prohibit insurers from covering conversion therapy; (2) making it unlawful for any mental health facility that is licensed, funded or operated by OMH from providing conversion therapy; and (3) prohibiting Medicaid coverage of conversion therapy. However, to fully address this issue, the passage and enactment of S.121 is needed.

Please join NASW-NYS's fight today by calling or writing your Senator! Your voice is critical to building the strong support needed to get the bill to the floor for a vote.

To find out who your Senator is, enter your address at: <https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator>. Call the Senate switchboard at (518) 455-2800 and ask to be connected to your Senator's office.

THE MESSAGE TO YOUR SENATOR BY PHONE/EMAIL

Hi, my name is _____. I am a constituent and/or treat constituents of Senator _____'s district. I am calling today to urge the Senator to: (1) support legislation (S.121) that would prohibit mental health professionals from engaging in efforts to change a minor's sexual orientation, so-called conversion therapy, as well as defining such efforts as professional misconduct; and, (2) urge Senate Majority Leader Flanagan to bring the bill to the floor for a vote before the end of the session.

As a social worker, I strongly support this legislation to prohibit conversion therapy for minors. The practice has been repudiated and discredited by nearly every major medical and professional association, including the American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychological Association, the National Association of Social Workers and the American Academy of Pediatrics, recognizing the serious harm it can have on minors, including increased risk of depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, social withdrawal, and self-loathing.

Please urge Senate leadership to bring this bill to the floor for a vote before the end of session! Thank you.