

FOR LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Call Your Senator and Senate Leadership This Week in Support of Legislation to Prohibit So-Called “Conversion Therapy” for Minors: Urge Bill Be Brought to the Senate Floor for a Vote before the end of session

The end of the Legislative Session is on the horizon and it is imperative you **call** your Senator and Senate leadership **this week** to:

- (1) identify yourself as a licensed mental health professional who **strongly supports** legislation (S.263), which would prohibit licensed 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;
- (2) note that accounts of its use continue to surface with survivors recounting horrific experiences, ranging from use of electrified devices to isolation from family members for years on end, which by any standard or definition amount to child abuse; and,
- (3) urge the bill be brought to the Senate floor for a vote before the end of the session. (Assembly companion bill passed the Assembly on March 28, 2017).

Background on the issue:

- Recognizing the long-term detrimental consequences, such as an increased risk of depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, social withdrawal, and self-loathing, every major medical and professional association has discredited and repudiated “conversion therapy,” including among others the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, The Clinical Social Work Association, and The National Association of Social Workers.
- ***It’s important to note and understand that despite the Executive action taken last year by the Governor, the enactment of this legislation is needed.*** As a result of the Executive Action taken in 2016: (1) insurers and Medicaid are prohibited from covering so-called “conversion therapy” for minors and, (2) any mental health facility that is licensed, funded or operated by the Office of Mental Health is barred from engaging in so-called “conversion therapy” with minors.
- However, to fully address this issue, the passage and enactment of S.263 is needed in order to prohibit mental health professionals licensed by New York State from engaging in so-called “conversion therapy.”

ACTION NEEDED THIS WEEK

Please call:

- (1) Your Senator - 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.

Also please call the following Senate and Committee leaders and urge the bill be made a priority for passage before the end of session:

- (2) Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan – Albany Office Number: (518) 455-2071
- (3) Senate Independent Democratic Conference Leader Jeff Klein – Albany Office Number: (518) 455-3595
- (4) Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins – Albany Office Number: (518) 455-2585
- (5) Senate Robert Ortt, Chair of the Senate Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee – The bill is currently pending in the Senator’s committee. – Albany Office Number: (518) 455-2024

Please join the fight today by making these five phone calls this week! Your voice is critical to building the strong support needed to get the bill to the floor for a vote.

YOUR SCRIPT

Hi, my name is _____. I am a constituent and/or treat constituents of Senator _____'s district. I am calling today to: (1) identify myself as a licensed mental health professional who ***strongly supports*** legislation (S.263), which would prohibit licensed 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; (2) note that accounts of its use continue to surface with survivors recounting horrific experiences, ranging from use of electrified devices to isolation from family members for years on end, which by any standard or definition amount to child abuse; and (3) urge the bill be brought to the Senate floor for a vote before the end of the session.

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

This legislation is strongly supported by New York's mental health professions as well as a number of other medical, educational, as well as mental health consumer advocacy organizations, including: Families Together in New York State, Medical Society of the State of New York, Mental Health Association in New York State, National Association of Social Workers – New York City and New York State Chapters, New York Society for Clinical Social Work, New York State-American Academy of Pediatrics, New York State Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, New York State Psychiatric Association, and New York State Psychological Association.

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