



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 21, 2013

Christie Signs Law Banning Minors From Therapy for Same-Sex Attraction

Republican New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (shown) quietly signed a bill into law August 19 making it illegal for licensed therapists in the state to help minors overcome homosexual attraction — even with the approval of their parents. The bill, A3371, bans any qualified therapist, psychologist, social worker, or anyone “who performs counseling as part of the person’s professional training for any of these professions,” from counseling anyone under 18 years of age with the intent of helping that person change his or her sexual orientation. Therapies and treatments that are prohibited, according to the bill’s language, include “efforts to change behaviors, gender identity, or gender expressions, or to reduce or eliminate sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward a person of the same gender.”



Christie, who has promoted himself as socially conservative, [explained that he signed the bill](#) based on the recommendations of the American Psychological Association (APA), which insisted that its research shows such “conversion” or “reparative” therapy can lead teens struggling with homosexual feelings into “depression, substance abuse, social withdrawal, decreased self-esteem, and suicidal thoughts.”

While claiming to have “concerns about government limiting parental choice on the care and treatment of their own children,” Christie nonetheless said “I believe that exposing children to these health risks without clear evidence of benefits that outweigh these serious risks is not appropriate. Based upon this analysis, I sign this bill into law.”

Troy Stevenson, executive director of the homosexual activist group Garden State Equality, applauded the new law that will encourage youth to embrace homosexuality. “The best way to ensure our LGBT youth are protected from the abuse of being ostracized is to provide them with full equality,” Stevenson said in a statement. “We must provide all NJ youth with acceptance, with hope for the future, and yes, the promise of the dignity to marry the person that they love.”

Christie is a practicing Catholic, but has said he disagrees with the Catholic Church’s longtime scriptural teaching on the sinfulness of homosexuality. That conviction, along with centuries of tradition and proof of the destructive nature of the aberrant lifestyle, has inspired a majority of states to pass constitutional amendments defining marriage as only between a man and a woman. Last year, Christie vetoed a bill to legalize homosexual marriage in New Jersey, and was critical of the recent Supreme Court ruling against the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which banned the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.



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Democratic State Senator Raymond Lesniak, who sponsored the legislation banning the therapy, praised Christie for affirming “what many opponents of marriage equality do not recognize, which is that gay people are not in need of treatment. That’s certainly an important statement to make and he made that with his signing of the bill.” Lesniak added hopefully that legalizing homosexual marriage in New Jersey would be “a natural next step.”

New Jersey is the second state to pass a law banning concerned and qualified adults from helping youth deal with unwanted same-sex attraction. [In October 2012](#), California Governor Jerry Brown signed a law banning reparative therapy for minors in his state. In a statement Brown parroted the talking points of homosexual activists pushing the measure, arguing that such therapies “have no basis in science or medicine and they will now be relegated to the dustbin of quackery.”

As it did with the California law, the conservative legal advocacy group [Liberty Counsel](#) condemned the New Jersey bill and said that it would pursue a challenge to see it overturned. The group’s founder and chairman, Matt Staver, said that in signing the bill Christie was “putting himself in every counseling room, dictating what kind of counseling clients can receive. This bill provides a slippery slope of government infringing upon the First Amendment [guarantees] of counselors to provide, and patients to receive, counseling consistent with their religious beliefs.”

Staver noted that the bill is so broad “that parents would be prohibited from seeking help for their son who developed unwanted same-sex attractions after being molested by the likes of Jerry Sandusky. Counselors would only be allowed to affirm these unwanted feelings as good and normal. This is absurd and dangerous. This law would inflict serious damage to children, parents, and counselors.”

As for Christie’s insistence that the new law was based on research from the APA, Liberty Counsel noted that the APA’s 2009 *Task Force Report*, cited by the New Jersey bill’s sponsors, “specifically states that there is evidence of benefit of such counseling, and any such reports to the contrary were only anecdotal. The Report also states that there is no research — none — regarding the effects of change therapy involving minors.”

Brad Dacus of the [Pacific Justice Institute](#), which has filed suit to overturn the California law, said that the laws in both states came about because of pressure from homosexual groups, and not because of scientific evidence. “The question here isn’t if sexuality comes from birth or not,” he noted. “The question is should we allow the government to restrict religious and constitutional freedoms because a forceful LGBT lobby says we should? The answer to that question is a resounding ‘No.’”

Addressing the attack against religious freedoms that are implicit in the bill, Denny Burke, a professor of biblical studies at Louisville, Kentucky’s Boyce College, wrote on his [blog site](#) that the new law will mean that “licensed service providers who also happen to be Christian will have to choose. They can either abandon Christian teaching or they can abandon their profession. The law now prohibits them from doing both. You just watch. Any counselor or therapist who tries to buck the system on this one will lose their credentials from the state. There will be no religious liberty exception.”

Photo of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie: AP Images



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