

**ASSEMBLY, No. 1488**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman PAUL D. MORIARTY**

**District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

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**District 33 (Hudson)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywomen Lampitt, Murphy and Jasey**

**SYNOPSIS**

Prohibits attempts by mental health professionals to change sexual orientation of adults.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1   **AN ACT** concerning sexual orientation change efforts and  
2       supplementing Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.

3

4       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5       *of New Jersey:*

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7       1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8       a. While sexual orientation change efforts are often performed  
9       on children and adolescents, and the majority of commentators on  
10       this issue have focused on the impact of sexual orientation change  
11       efforts on young patients, approximately half of the nearly 700,000  
12       adults in the country who have been subject to sexual orientation  
13       change efforts were subjected to such efforts as adults, and not  
14       while they were children.

15       b. According to the American Psychological Association,  
16       sexual orientation change efforts may include psychologically or  
17       physically painful or humiliating treatments, such as electroshock  
18       therapy; the inducement of nausea, vomiting, or paralysis while  
19       showing the patient homoerotic images; the use of shame to create  
20       aversion to same-sex attractions; or the use of orgasmic  
21       reconditioning and satiation therapy, which require the physical  
22       monitoring of a patient's arousal to sexual imagery and fantasies.

23       c. All of the nation's leading professional medical and mental  
24       health associations have rejected sexual orientation change efforts  
25       as unnecessary, ineffective, dangerous, and unethical.

26       d. The American Psychological Association's 2009  
27       comprehensive review of the published literature on sexual  
28       orientation change efforts has found that these practices are not  
29       supported by any reliable evidence. Instead, the evidence shows  
30       that these methods are wholly ineffective, and are unlikely to result  
31       in either the reduction of same-sex sexual attraction or the increase  
32       of attraction to other sexes.

33       e. While there is no scientific peer-reviewed evidence  
34       indicating that sexual orientation change efforts are effective, there  
35       is extensive research and evidence showing that these practices  
36       cause significant and long-lasting harm to patients, and sometimes  
37       have fatal results.

38       f. Research further shows that sexual orientation change efforts  
39       remain dangerous and ineffective, regardless of the age of the  
40       patient who is receiving such treatment.

41       g. New Jersey has a compelling interest in protecting the  
42       health, safety, and wellbeing of its adult citizenry, just as it has  
43       done for its youth citizenry, by ensuring that adults in the State are  
44       not exposed to harm as a result of sexual orientation change efforts  
45       undertaken by the State's mental health professionals.

46

47       2. a. A person who is licensed to provide professional  
48       counseling under Title 45 of the Revised Statutes, including, but not

1 limited to, a psychiatrist, licensed practicing psychologist, licensed  
2 professional counselor, certified social worker, licensed clinical  
3 social worker, licensed social worker, licensed marriage and family  
4 therapist, certified psychoanalyst, or a person who performs  
5 counseling as part of the person's professional training for any of  
6 these professions, shall not engage in sexual orientation change  
7 efforts with a person who is 18 years of age or older.

8 b. As used in this section, "sexual orientation change efforts"  
9 means the same as that term is defined by section 2 of P.L.2013,  
10 c.150 (C.45:1-55).

11  
12 3. This act shall take effect immediately.  
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15 STATEMENT  
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17 This bill would prohibit the State's mental health professionals  
18 from engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with their adult  
19 patients. Sexual orientation change efforts, such as conversion  
20 therapy or reparative therapy, have been used by mental health  
21 professionals for decades in an attempt to change the sexual  
22 orientation of patients who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual,  
23 or queer (LGBTQ), but these techniques have been found to be  
24 ineffective in achieving these goals and have been proven to be  
25 harmful to patients, sometimes even leading to fatal results.

26 The State of New Jersey already prohibits the use of sexual  
27 orientation change efforts on patients who are under the age of 18.  
28 However, no similar prohibition exists for adults. This is despite  
29 the fact that approximately half of the nearly 700,000 adults in the  
30 country who have been subject to sexual orientation change efforts  
31 were subjected to such efforts as adults, and not while they were  
32 children. Because sexual orientation change efforts are dangerous  
33 and ineffective, regardless of the age of the patient who is receiving  
34 such treatment, it is both reasonable and necessary for the State to  
35 extend the existing prohibition on this practice to cases where it is  
36 used on adults.