

February 26, 2019

**RE: Letter Urging All Utah Legislators to Oppose H.B. 399 - Conversion Therapy Ban**

Dear Legislators:

We, as concerned parents and citizens of Utah, the Utah Empowered Families Coalition, and other Utah organizations concerned about the welfare of Utah's children, urge you to oppose H.B. 399, the proposed bill to ban change therapy for minors with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion. Although well intentioned, H.B. 399 will cause great harm to the very children it is intended to help. This is because it is based on the following three false claims:

**False Claim #1:** Sexual attractions and gender identities are fixed and unchangeable.

**FACT: Attractions and self-perceived identities are fluid, and many people have changed.** (See [VoicesofChange.net](http://VoicesofChange.net), [SexChangeRegret.com](http://SexChangeRegret.com), <https://changedmovement.com/>, <https://www.voiceofthevoiceless.info>, [www.UnderstandingSameSexAttraction.org](http://www.UnderstandingSameSexAttraction.org), and see also [www.FamilyWatch.org/therapyban](http://www.FamilyWatch.org/therapyban) for documented peer-reviewed research.)

**False Claim #2:** If we don't ban change therapy, more people will commit suicide.

**FACT: A number of people have testified that change therapy actually prevented them from committing suicide.** (See websites above.)

**False Claim #3:** All licensed Utah therapists who provide change therapy use abusive techniques such as painful electric shock treatments.

**FACT: This claim is an absurd scare tactic. This practice was discredited and abandoned decades ago by all professional therapists.** (See [NARTH.org](http://NARTH.org).) If this is truly a concern, then Utah should pass a bill specifically banning shock therapy while protecting mainstream, ethical and voluntary change therapy.

**10 Serious Negative Consequences if H.B. 399 is Enacted**

1. **Choice will be abolished.** If H.B. 399 is enacted, gender-confused children will be forced to either go without therapy for their *unwanted* behaviors or feelings related to sexual orientation or self-perceived gender identity or receive transgender “transition” support only. Such “transition” protocols often include puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and genital-mutilating surgeries—protocols that impair sexual functioning and cause infertility for life.

2. Sexually abused children who have developed unwanted same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria as a result of their abuse will have to wait until adulthood to get the professional help they need.
3. **Children with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion who are already at a higher risk for suicide could ultimately take their own lives** when denied the therapy they want and need.
4. **Therapists who are currently treating children with psychological comorbidities** (i.e., a combination of porn addiction, depression, unwanted same-sex attraction, gender dysphoria, etc.) **will be forced to address only part of their child clients' needs.**
5. **The only legal change counseling available to children will be from religious leaders who have no professional training** in treating unwanted same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria.
6. **The rights of parents to guide the health services of their children will be violated.**
7. **The religious rights of parents and children will be undermined.**
8. **The free speech rights of therapists will be violated.**
9. **The right to self-determination of therapy clients will be violated.**
10. **The state of Utah will have launched a huge overreach into the personal, intimate sexual lives and identity aspects of children and their families,** dictating health decisions that should be left up to parents, children, and their professional therapists.

**We urge you to OPPOSE H.B. 399 – Prohibition of the Practice of Conversion Therapy Upon Minors.**

Respectfully,

Empowered Families Coalition  
Utah Eagle Forum  
Family Watch International  
Worldwide Organization for Women  
Gathering Families

United Women's Forum  
Loving Liberty Inc.  
Utah County Republican Assembly  
The Leadership Foundation  
Principles of Freedom