

PROPOSED

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, OPPOSING CONVERSION THERAPY ON MINORS; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

(Sponsored by Senator Nan H. Rich)

WHEREAS, being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning is part of the natural spectrum of human identity, not a disease, disorder, illness, deficiency, or shortcoming, and the major professional associations of mental health practitioners and researchers in the United States have recognized this fact for nearly 40 years;

WHEREAS, in June 2012 the American Psychoanalytic Association issued a position statement on conversion therapy efforts, stating that, "[a]s with any societal prejudice, bias against individuals based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression negatively affects mental health, contributing to an enduring sense of stigma and pervasive self-criticism through the internalization of such prejudice" and that "[p]sychoanalytic technique does not encompass purposeful attempts to 'convert,' 'repair,' change or shift an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression," such efforts being inapposite to "fundamental principles of psychoanalytic treatment and often result in substantial psychological pain by reinforcing damaging internalized attitudes";

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry published an article in its September 2012 journal stating that clinicians should be aware that there

23 is "no evidence that sexual orientation can be altered through therapy and that attempts
24 to do so may be harmful"; that there is "no medically valid basis for attempting to prevent
25 homosexuality, which is not an illness"; that such efforts may encourage family rejection
26 and undermine self-esteem, connectedness, and important protective factors against
27 suicidal thoughts and actions; and that, for similar reasons cumulatively stated above,
28 sexual orientation change efforts are contraindicated;

29 WHEREAS, the Pan American Health Organization, a regional office of the World
30 Health Organization, stated in May 2012, "These supposed conversion therapies
31 constitute a violation of the ethical principles of health care and violate human rights that
32 are protected by international and regional agreements." The organization also noted that
33 conversion therapies "lack medical justification and represent a serious threat to the
34 health and well-being of affected people";

35 WHEREAS, a 2015 report of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
36 Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Ending
37 Conversion Therapy: Supporting and Affirming LGBTQ Youth," found that based on
38 scientific literature, conversion therapy to change an individual's sexual orientation,
39 gender identity, or gender expression is a practice not supported by credible evidence, is
40 disavowed by behavioral health experts and associations, and perpetuates outdated
41 views of gender roles and identities and negative stereotypes. The report further stated
42 that such therapy may put young people at risk of serious harm, and that same-gender
43 sexual orientation (including identity, behavior, and attraction) is part of the normal
44 spectrum of human diversity and does not constitute a mental disorder;

WHEREAS, a 2009 study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults that have higher levels of family rejection based on their sexual orientation during adolescence were 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide, 5.9 times more likely to report high levels of depression, 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs, and 3.4 times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection;

WHEREAS, in 2018 the American Psychiatric Association issued a position statement reaffirming its recommendation that ethical practitioners refrain from attempts to change individuals' sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, in 2021 the American Psychological Association issued a resolution reiterating its strong and long-standing opposition to conversion therapy and affirming that the scientific evidence and clinical experience indicate that conversion therapy puts individuals at significant risk of harm;

WHEREAS, Broward County finds that the overwhelming research demonstrates that sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts pose critical health risks to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender nonconforming, or gender-questioning persons, and that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender nonconforming, or gender-questioning is not a mental disease, mental disorder, mental illness, deficiency, or shortcoming; and

WHEREAS, Broward County has a compelling interest in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including, but not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender nonconforming, and gender-questioning youth, and in

protecting minors against exposure to serious harms caused by sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts, NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA:

Section 1. Based on the above-referenced research, studies, and findings, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners believes that conversion therapy is harmful to the physical and psychological well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning persons.

Section 2. The Broward County Board of County Commissioners opposes the use of conversion therapy on minors and strongly discourages individuals, particularly those providing mental health counseling or therapy, from using conversion therapy on minors.

Section 3. Severability.

If any portion of this Resolution is determined by any court to be invalid, the invalid portion will be stricken, and such striking will not affect the validity of the remainder of this Resolution. If any court determines that this Resolution, in whole or in part, cannot be legally applied to any individual, group, entity, property, or circumstance, such determination will not affect the applicability of this Resolution to any other individual, group, entity, property, or circumstance.

88 | This Resolution is effective upon adoption.

PROPOSED

By: /s/ René D. Harrod 08/02/2022
René D. Harrod (date)
Chief Deputy County Attorney