



Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners
Office of the Commission Auditor

Board of County Commissioners Meeting

June 6, 2017
9:30 AM
Commission Chamber

Office of the Commission Auditor
111 N.W. First Street, Suite 1030
Miami, FL 33128
(305) 375-2524

**Board of County Commissioners
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Revised Research Notes for Item 4A**

Item No.	Research Notes
<p>4A 171359</p>	<p>ORDINANCE RELATING TO CONVERSION OR REPARATIVE THERAPY FOR MINORS; CREATING ARTICLE XX, CHAPTER 21 OF THE CODE OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS, PROVIDING FOR APPLICABILITY IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND ENFORCEMENT BY THE COUNTY; PROHIBITING CERTAIN LICENSED PROFESSIONAL THERAPISTS AND COUNSELORS FROM ENGAGING IN CONVERSION OR REPARATIVE THERAPY WITH A MINOR; AMENDING 8CC-10; PROVIDING PENALTIES; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY, INCLUSION IN THE CODE, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.</p>
<p>Notes</p>	<p>The proposed ordinance, relating to conversion or reparative therapy for minors, creates article XX, Chapter 21 of the County Code; provides definitions and for applicability in the Unincorporated Areas of the County; and enforcement by the County. The ordinance prohibits certain licensed or unlicensed professional therapists and counselors from engaging in conversion or reparative therapy with a minor, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth; and amends 8cc-10 and provides penalties.</p> <p>The ordinance defines conversion therapy (also called reparative therapy) as:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Any counseling, practice, or treatment performed with the goal of changing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity including, but not limited to, efforts to change behaviors, gender expression, or to reduce or eliminate sexual or romantic attraction or feelings toward a person of the same gender. Conversion therapy does not include counseling that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides support to a person undergoing gender transition; or • Provides acceptance, support, or understanding of a person, or facilitates a person's coping, social support, identity exploration, and development, including sexual orientation-neutral interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices, if such counseling is not conducted with the goal of changing the person's sexual orientation or gender identity. <p>The ordinance prohibits:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A person who is licensed or is not licensed by the state to provide professional counseling, or who performs counseling as part of their professional training under Chapters 458, 459, 490, or 491, Florida Statutes, as such chapters may be amended, including, but not limited to, medical practitioners, osteopathic practitioners, psychologist, psychotherapists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and licensed counselors, from engaging in conversion therapy or reparative therapy with a minor.</p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Reparative therapists also known as conversion therapists are psychotherapists that aim at changing a person's homosexuality based on the view that homosexuality is a mental disorder. However, in the last four decades, “reparative” therapists have not produced any acceptable scientific research to substantiate their claims of cure.</p> <p>Numerous major professional associations of mental health practitioners and researchers in the United States have recognized that homosexuality is not a disease. For instance, the American</p>

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	<p>Psychological Association convened a Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation (Task Force), which conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed journal literature on sexual orientation change efforts commonly known as conversion or reparative therapy.</p> <p>The Task Force issued a report in 2009 in which it concluded that efforts to change a person’s sexual orientation can pose critical health risks to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, including confusion, depression, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, shame, social withdrawal, suicidality, substance abuse, stress, disappointment, self-blame, decreased self-esteem and authenticity to others, increased self-hatred, hostility and blame toward parents, feelings of anger and betrayal, loss of friends and potential romantic partners, problems in sexual and emotional intimacy, sexual dysfunction, high-risk sexual behaviors, a feeling of being dehumanized and untrue to self, a loss of faith, and a sense of having wasted time and resources.</p> <p>The Task Force’s findings are supported by a scientific consensus that the practices endorsed by reparative therapists have no scientific basis; they contradict the modern scientific understanding of sexual orientation, and put young people at risk of serious harm, including severe depression and suicide.</p> <p>The American Psychological Association issued a resolution on Appropriate Affirmative Responses to Sexual Orientation Distress and Change Efforts in 2009, which advises parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social supports, and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth.</p> <p>The American Psychiatric Association published a position statement in March of 2000 which concluded that Psychotherapeutic modalities to convert or “repair” homosexuality are based on developmental theories whose scientific validity is questionable, and such attempts to do so result in psychological harm. The American Psychiatric Association, therefore, opposes any psychiatric treatment such as reparative or conversion therapy which is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder or based upon the prior assumption that a patient should change their sexual orientation. As a result, it recommends that ethical practitioners refrain from attempts to change individuals’ sexual orientation.</p> <p>The American School Counselor Association's position statement on professional school counselors and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth concludes that: “It is not the role of the professional school counselor to attempt to change a student’s sexual orientation/gender identity but instead to provide support to LGBTQ students to promote student achievement and personal well-being.”</p> <p>The American Academy of Pediatrics in 1993 also published an article in its journal, Pediatrics, stating: “Therapy directed at specifically changing sexual orientation is contraindicated, since it</p>

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	can provoke guilt and anxiety while having little or no potential for achieving changes in orientation.”