



City of Pittsburgh

510 City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Text File

Introduced: 11/29/2016

Bill No: 2016-1038, **Version:** 2

Committee: Committee on Public Safety
Services

Status: Passed Finally

Ordinance supplementing the Pittsburgh Code, Title VI Conduct, Article 1 Regulated Rights and Actions, to add a new Section 628 Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression Conversion Efforts prohibiting the practice of conversion therapy for LGBTQIA+ minors within the City of Pittsburgh.

WHEREAS, the practice of LGBTQIA+ conversion therapy or reparative therapy is formally opposed by the following organizations: American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, American College of Physicians, American Counseling Association, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychological Association, American School Counselor Association, American School Health Association, National Association of Social Workers, Pan American Health Organization: Regional Office of the World Health Organization, and World Psychiatric Association; and,

WHEREAS, a report by the American Psychological Association cites the severe mental health problems caused by sexual orientation conversion efforts, including depression, decreased self-esteem, social withdrawal, substance abuse, dehumanization, feelings of hostility and anger, and suicidal thoughts; and,

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry determined that no evidence exists to prove the efficacy or necessity of conversion therapy and concluded that same-sex attraction is neither an illness nor a mental health disorder and therefore, cannot be altered by conversion therapy; and,

WHEREAS, the American Counseling Association (ACA) also affirmed that homosexuality is not listed as a disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, which is used by mental health and medical professional organizations to determine best practices for treatment of various conditions, and the ACA also cites a study by the American Psychological Association's Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation, stating that 50% of individuals who were subjected to conversion therapy reported harmful psychological effects; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh has a vested interest in protecting the psychological and physical well-being of minors, including LGBTQIA+ youth and preventing the serious harms caused by sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression conversion efforts; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Pittsburgh desires to prohibit the practice of conversion therapy for LGBTQIA+ minors within the geographic borders of the City of Pittsburgh.

Be it resolved that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The Pittsburgh Code, Title VI Conduct, Article 1 Regulated Rights and Actions, is hereby supplemented to add a new Section 628 Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression Conversion Efforts, as follows:

Section 628 Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression Conversion Efforts

Section 628.01- DEFINITIONS

- a. “Conversion therapy” means any treatment that aims to convert one’s sexual orientation or to convert an individual who identifies with a gender other than the gender assigned at birth to the originally assigned gender.
- b. “Mental health professional” means an individual who is licensed, certified or registered under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to provide, to an individual or a group, mental health services, including but not limited to, the assessment or improvement of mental, emotional, psychiatric, psychological, or psychosocial adjustment or functioning, regardless of whether there is a diagnosable, pre-existing disorder or disease. Mental health professionals include, but are not limited to, physicians specializing in the practice of psychiatry, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical social workers, professional clinical counselors, behavioral clinicians or therapists, nurses, or any other persons offering such mental health service.
- c. “Minor” means a person less than eighteen (18) years of age.
- d. “Reparative therapy” has the same meaning of “conversion therapy” as defined in Section 628.01a herein.
- e. “Sexual orientation or gender identity conversion efforts” means conversion therapy, reparative therapy or any other practices by mental health professionals that seek to convert an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, including efforts to change behaviors, or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex. “Sexual orientation or gender identity or expression conversion efforts” does not include psychotherapies that provide acceptance, support, and understanding of clients or the facilitation of clients’ coping, social support, and identity exploration and development, including sexual orientation-neutral interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices, and psychotherapies that do not seek to change sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Section 628.02- SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION CONVERSION EFFORTS PROHIBITED

No mental health professional shall engage, within the geographic boundaries of the City of Pittsburgh, in sexual orientation or gender identity or expression conversion efforts with a minor,

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without regard to whether the mental health professional is compensated or receives any form of remuneration for his or her services.