

ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY, No. 3371**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 13, 2013

The Assembly Women and Children Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3371.

This bill prohibits counseling to change the sexual orientation of a minor.

Under the provisions of the bill, a person who is licensed to provide professional counseling, including, but not limited to, a psychiatrist, licensed practicing psychologist, certified social worker, licensed clinical social worker, licensed social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist, certified psychoanalyst, or a person who performs counseling as part of the person's professional training, is prohibited from engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with a person under 18 years of age.

The bill defines "sexual orientation change efforts" as the practice of seeking to change a person's sexual orientation, including, but not limited to, efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions, or to reduce or eliminate sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward a person of the same gender. The term, however, does not include counseling for a person seeking to transition from one gender to another, or counseling that: provides acceptance, support, and 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; and does not seek to change sexual orientation.

This bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 2278 (1R) (Lesniak/Sweeney/Weinberg) which was released by the Senate Health, Human Services, and Senior Citizens Committee on March 18, 2013 and is currently pending before the Senate.