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Contact: Carisa Cunningham
(617) 447-6500
cc@carisacunningham.com

MA Becomes 16th State to Ban Conversion Therapy *GLAD Praises Banning of Harmful Practice on LGBTQ Youth*

Yesterday with Governor Charlie Baker's signature, Massachusetts became the 16th state to ban the dangerous and discredited practice of conversion therapy on LGBTQ youth, which attempts to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The Senate and the House passed the bill earlier with broad bipartisan support.

Ben Klein, Senior Attorney for GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), issued the following statement:

"Conversion therapy is a disgraceful remnant of the mistreatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in our society. It is based on the long discredited notion that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is a mental disorder or abnormality.

"This law will protect youth from the significant harm inflicted by those who engage in the antiquated practice of conversion therapy. LGBTQ youth must be able to grow up in a world in which they can thrive and develop into adults under the same conditions as their peers. This bill is a proud moment in Massachusetts' long history of creating a better world for all young people."

Today there is a consensus among the medical and mental health professional groups that conversion therapy is ineffective, and that it subjects individuals to significant harm. It has been condemned by The American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Counseling Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychoanalytic Association, Australian Psychological Society, British Psychological Association, Endocrine Society, National Association of Social Workers, Psychological Society of Ireland, Psychological Society of South Africa, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.

GLAD has worked to pass the legislation as a member of the Massachusetts Coalition to Ban Conversion Therapy for Minors. Massachusetts joins New England states Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire in banning the practice.

Similar legislation is pending this session in Maine, where there will be a public hearing tomorrow before the Joint Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services.

Through strategic litigation, public policy advocacy, and education, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders works in New England and nationally to create a just society free of discrimination based on gender identity and expression, HIV status, and sexual orientation.

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