

House Bill 580

By: Representatives Wilson of the 80th, Oliver of the 82nd, Hutchinson of the 107th, Buckner of the 137th, Gardner of the 57th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to professions and
2 businesses, so as to prohibit the practice of conversion therapy; to provide for related matters;
3 to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

5 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

6 Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to professions and businesses,
7 is amended by adding a new Code section in Chapter 10A, relating to professional
8 counselors, to read as follows:

9 "43-10A-22.1.

10 (a) This Code section shall be known and may be cited as the 'Youth Mental Health
11 Protection Act.'

12 (b) As used in this Code section, the term 'conversion therapy' means any practice or
13 treatment that seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity,
14 including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual
15 or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender. Conversion
16 therapy shall not include counseling that provides assistance to a person undergoing gender
17 transition, or counseling that provides acceptance, support, and understanding of a person
18 or facilitates a person's coping, social support, and identity exploration and development,
19 including interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices,
20 as long as such counseling is applied neutrally as to a person's sexual orientation and
21 gender identity and does not seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender
22 identity.

23 (c) A person who is authorized to provide counseling under this chapter shall not engage
24 in conversion therapy with a person under 18 years of age. Any instance of engaging in
25 conversion therapy shall be considered unprofessional conduct and shall subject the
26 practitioner to discipline by the appropriate licensing authority."

27 **SECTION 2.**

28 Said title is further amended by adding a new Code section in Chapter 34, relating to
 29 physicians, to read as follows:

30 "43-34-22.1.

31 (a) This Code section shall be known and may be cited as the 'Youth Mental Health
 32 Protection Act.'

33 (b) As used in this Code section, the term 'conversion therapy' means any practice or
 34 treatment that seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity,
 35 including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual
 36 or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender. Conversion
 37 therapy shall not include counseling that provides assistance to a person undergoing gender
 38 transition, or counseling that provides acceptance, support, and understanding of a person
 39 or facilitates a person's coping, social support, and identity exploration and development,
 40 including interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices,
 41 as long as such counseling is applied neutrally as to a person's sexual orientation and
 42 gender identity and does not seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender
 43 identity.

44 (c) A person who is authorized to provide counseling under this chapter shall not engage
 45 in conversion therapy with a person under 18 years of age. Any instance of engaging in
 46 conversion therapy shall be considered unprofessional conduct and shall subject the
 47 practitioner to discipline by the appropriate licensing authority."

48 **SECTION 3.**

49 Said title is further amended by adding a new Code section in Chapter 39, relating to
 50 psychologists, to read as follows:

51 "43-39-6.1.

52 (a) This Code section shall be known and may be cited as the 'Youth Mental Health
 53 Protection Act.'

54 (b) As used in this Code section, the term 'conversion therapy' means any practice or
 55 treatment that seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity,
 56 including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual
 57 or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender. Conversion
 58 therapy shall not include counseling that provides assistance to a person undergoing gender
 59 transition, or counseling that provides acceptance, support, and understanding of a person
 60 or facilitates a person's coping, social support, and identity exploration and development,
 61 including interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices,
 62 as long as such counseling is applied neutrally as to a person's sexual orientation and

63 gender identity and does not seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender
64 identity.

65 (c) A person who is authorized to provide counseling under this chapter shall not engage
66 in conversion therapy with a person under 18 years of age. Any instance of engaging in
67 conversion therapy shall be considered unprofessional conduct and shall subject the
68 practitioner to discipline by the appropriate licensing authority."

69 **SECTION 4.**

70 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2019.

71 **SECTION 5.**

72 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.