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SENATE BILL NO. 262

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 6, 2016

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 24 of Title 54.1 a section numbered 54.1-2409.5, relating to the prohibition of conversion therapy.*

Patrons—Surovell, Ebbin, Lewis and Lucas

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 24 of Title 54.1 a section numbered 54.1-2409.5 as follows:

§ 54.1-2409.5. Conversion therapy prohibited.

A. As used in this section, "conversion therapy" means any practice or treatment that seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender. "Conversion therapy" does not include counseling that provides assistance to a person undergoing gender transition or counseling that provides acceptance, support, and understanding of a person or facilitates a person's coping, social support, and identity exploration and development, including sexual-orientation-neutral interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices, as long as such counseling does not seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

B. No person licensed pursuant to this subtitle or who performs counseling as part of his training for any profession licensed pursuant to this subtitle shall engage in conversion therapy with a person under 18 years of age. Any conversion therapy efforts with a person under 18 years of age engaged in by a provider licensed in accordance with the provisions of this subtitle or who performs counseling as part of his training for any profession licensed pursuant to this subtitle shall constitute unprofessional conduct and shall be grounds for disciplinary action by the appropriate health regulatory board within the Department of Health Professions.

2. That no state funds shall be expended for the purpose of conducting conversion therapy, referring a person for conversion therapy, extending health benefits coverage for conversion therapy, or awarding a grant or contract to any entity that conducts conversion therapy or refers individuals for conversion therapy.

INTRODUCED

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