



June 22, 2018

Re: AB 2943 (Low) – Oppose as amended

Dear Distinguished Member of the California State Senate:

Capitol Resource Institute is a public policy organization that exists to educate the public on issues regarding religious freedom, the family unit, and parental rights. We are asking you to oppose AB 2943.

AB 2943 prohibits individuals, whether a pastor, clergy, or licensed therapist, from: advertising, offering, or engaging in any activities that help individuals to pursue their self-selected goals of making personal life changes related to unwanted same-sex attractions or questions over their gender identity.

Under this bill, a person or organization, including a church, cannot engage in any fee-based practice—including pure speech—that tells someone that they can overcome unwanted same-sex attraction or gender identity confusion.

Politicians should not be mocking and discriminating against the belief in the power of faith to change a person's life—a belief held by numerous Californians of diverse faiths. Earlier this month, in the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case, the Supreme Court affirmed that government officials cannot disparage or demean a person's faith. Yet California politicians are doing just that by denying the stories of those who have experienced personal life changes. It is time for California politicians to respect our faith.

The idea that people can change and find true joy in embracing and living out their faith is at the heart of many religions. California politicians shouldn't be telling people that such faith is fraudulent. People looking for change should be free to find services and resources from counselors, schools, and faith-based organizations to help them achieve their desired goals and outcomes. AB 2943 would outlaw these individuals and organizations from

offering help to those seeking change, violating their rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

Despite a recent amendment, AB 2943 still impacts booksellers, because it prohibits services related to the sale of goods. A bookstore employee who recommends a book advocating the embrace of one's biological sex (such as *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Movement* by Ryan Anderson) would be engaging in a service related to the sale of a good—and such activities remain subject to AB 2943.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) states, "At its core, AB 2943 outlaws speech.... It targets a specific message—that an adult who is experiencing unwanted same-sex attraction or gender identity confusion can find help to address those issues—for censorship. The breadth of this censorship is staggering. "

ADF goes on to say that under AB 2943:

- A licensed counselor could not help a married mother of three who is experiencing unwanted attraction to a close female friend or confusion over her gender identity overcome those feelings;
- A religious ministry could not hold a conference on maintaining sexual purity if the conference encourages attendees to avoid homosexual behavior;
- A pastor paid to speak at an event addressing current social topics could not encourage attendees that they can prevail over same-sex desires or feelings that they were born the wrong sex.

AB 2943 is not about whether or not you agree with homosexuality, a fluid gender identity, or efforts to change those things. AB 2943 is a ban on speech, an assault on the freedom of people to be who they want to be, and greatly limits the choice of individuals when seeking counseling in their personal lives. Proponents of this bill call these efforts a fraud, but many speak to the great help that the freedom to pursue counseling of their choice was when dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity. Why would we want to limit the help that adults can seek of their own free will?

We humbly ask that you **OPPOSE AB 2943 as amended.**

Sincerely,



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