

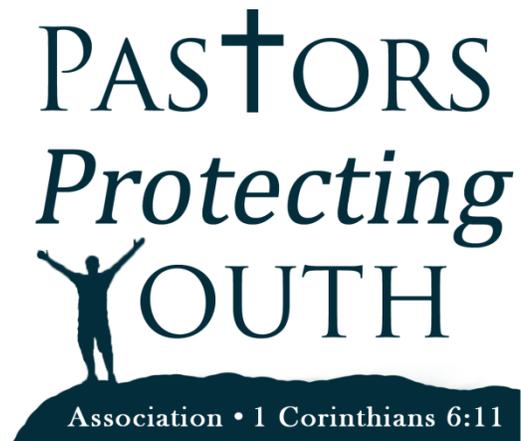
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 11, 2016

Pastors File Lawsuit Challenging Illinois' Ban on Sexual Identity Counseling

(August 11, 2016, Chicago, Illinois) On Thursday, Pastors Protecting Youth (PPY), an association of Illinois pastors, filed a Federal lawsuit against the State of Illinois in regards to the Youth Mental Health Protection Act, the state's newly enacted ban on sexual identity counseling for minors. The suit maintains that the ban unconstitutionally restricts a young person's right to make personal choices regarding his or her own choice of sexual identity, as well as the pastors' right to free speech and the exercise of religion.

The Act, which went into effect January 1, 2016, bans any licensed counselor from helping a young person who is seeking to overcome unwanted same-sex attractions. The Act further states that any "person or entity" in "any trade or commerce" who offers sexual identity counseling in a manner that portrays homosexuality as a disorder or illness, is guilty of consumer fraud. PPY is seeking a Declaratory Judgment from the court stating that the law should not apply to pastoral counseling which informs counselees that homosexuality conduct is a sin and disorder from God's plan for humanity.



PPY's attorney John W. Mauck of Mauck & Baker, LLC, says, "We are most concerned about young people who are seeking the right to choose their own identity. This is an essential human right. However, this law undermines the dignity and integrity of those who choose a different path for their lives than politicians and activists prefer. Each person should be free to receive Biblical and spiritual counseling from the pastor of their choice to help them orient their sexuality."

Pastor Steven Stultz of Nu-Church Apostolic Ministries of East Garfield says, "In 1 Corinthians 6:9, the Apostle Paul writes to those who had overcome many sins including homosexuality, stating, 'such *were* some of you' but you were changed through God's healing. I have personally witnessed many people change their sexual orientation through counseling and know it is possible. The government is interfering into someone's private decisions. This ban on counseling creates fear in the people most in need of comfort and support."

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