



Media Contact:

Rich Wyler, Founder and Director  
1-434-985-8551 or [rich@peoplecanchange.com](mailto:rich@peoplecanchange.com)

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## **PEOPLE CAN CHANGE CALLS ON CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY TO OPPOSE BILL THAT WOULD OUTLAW GAY-CHANGE THERAPIES FOR MINORS**

People Can Change, an international network of men who have changed from gay to straight and others working toward similar change, has voiced its strong opposition to a bill now making its way through the California legislature that would outlaw sexual orientation-change therapies for minors.

Senate Bill 1172 passed the California Senate May 30 on a party-line vote of 23 to 13 and is now scheduled for a hearing in the Assembly on June 26.

“SB1172 is blatant discrimination,” said Rich Wyler, founder and director of People Can Change. “It allows and even encourages gay-affirming therapies for minors while banning ‘straight-affirming’ alternatives. It disregards the client’s right to self-determination, and tells him that if he is questioning his sexuality, only a gay identity is politically correct. That is as unconscionable as allowing a pregnant minor to receive abortion counseling but banning counseling that offers adoption or single parenting as possible alternatives.

“SB1172 embraces the lie that change therapies never work and are often harmful,” Wyler said. “Proponents believe any anecdotes about alleged harm, but disregard every research study that shows the benefit and effectiveness of these therapies for a great many people.”

Wyler speaks from personal experience with sexual orientation-change therapy.

“It saved my life,” he said. “Before my therapy in Southern California in the 1990s, I was suicidal and on a path of self-destruction due to same-sex attractions that conflicted with my identify, my faith and my life goals. Working with a therapist who believed in the possibility of change and who supported me in my goals helped restore my life and my sense of self-worth. It saved my marriage and my family. Today, I am no longer same-sex attracted.”

Wyler founded People Can Change in 2000 as a network of men who have successfully worked to diminish or eliminate their homosexual attractions through counseling and related change efforts and who now support others who seek similar change. The organization’s flagship Journey Into Manhood weekend program, offered annually in California and six other states plus England and Israel, has drawn almost 2,000 men from 47 states and 37 countries. Surveys of past participants show that four out of five report experiencing reduced homosexual feelings six months or more after their Journey Into Manhood experience, and nine out of 10 report an improved sense of self-worth.

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