

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 10, 2016

Chairwoman Edith Ramirez
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest, Room 404
Washington, DC 20580

Dear Chairwoman Ramirez:

We write to you to express our deep concern with the continued practice of sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE), commonly referred to as “conversion therapy.” This practice falsely promises to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. We urge the Federal Trade Commission to take all actions possible to stop the unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent practice of conversion therapy under the authority provided to your agency in the *Federal Trade Commission Act*.

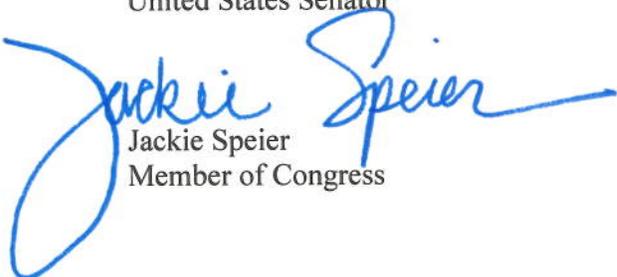
Conversion therapy, also known as “reparative” or “sexual orientation” therapy, is a practice that has been widely discredited by nearly all major American medical, psychiatric, psychological, professional counseling, educational, and social work professional organizations. In 2009, the nation’s largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology, the American Psychological Association, conducted a systematic review of the evidence on SOCE. The report concluded that “efforts to change sexual orientation are unlikely to be successful and involve some risk of harm, contrary to the claims of SOCE practitioners and advocates.”

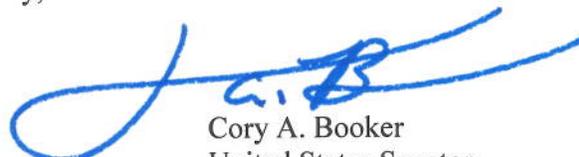
Perhaps most concerning are the effects of this harmful therapy on children and youth. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) children and youth are at increased risk of suicide, substance use disorder, and engaging in other high risk behaviors compared to their peers. Therapeutic support can be useful for children and youth who are LGBT or questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, resulting in more confidence and acceptance, which are important elements of healthy child development. However, conversion therapy provokes guilt, anxiety, and societal rejection that negatively impacts healthy development of children and youth, contrary to the claims of SOCE practitioners.

We urge the Federal Trade Commission to take decisive action to stop the unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent practice of “conversion therapy” under the authority provided to your agency in the *Federal Trade Commission Act*. We thank you for your attention to this pressing matter.

Sincerely,


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Jackie Speier
Member of Congress


Cory A. Booker
United States Senator


Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress