

Attorney Counters Gay Activism in Schools with NARTH Resources

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June 20, 2002

Maryland State Board of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Attention: Joyce Smith

Re: Multicultural Education Regulations

Dear Sirs and Madams:

My wife and I live in Frederick County, Maryland, and we are the parents of five children who are currently enrolled in public schools in that county.

I understand that the State Board of Education is proposing to make "sexual orientation" one of the "cultural groups" about which public school children will be educated. I understand that such a proposal is being made in order to protect gay students from harassment. I have several comments and suggestions to make regarding this matter.

demonstrate that there is a serious problem that would be created by such a program. The problem is that the very act of identifying students as gay in their formative school years has been shown to be totally unreliable and prone to encourage homosexual conduct, the latter of which causes serious physical and mental health problems.

A 1992 Minnesota study of 35,000 youth reported that 25.9% of 12-year-olds are uncertain if they are heterosexual or homosexual, whereas other studies show that only 2-3% of the adult population identifies itself as homosexual. (See page 5 of the enclosed NARTH brochure, "Homosexual Advocacy Groups & Your School.") This demonstrates that any school program that would involve the **identification** of gays would run the risk of misidentifying almost 25% of the students as gay.

While the risk of serious disability and death from AIDS is well known, there are other serious health and social problems that come with homosexual conduct. A recent study by Garofalo (NARTH, p. 4) documents that the following high health risk behaviors are significantly greater for gay, lesbian and bisexual (GLB) high school students than for non -GLBs:

Alcohol use before age 13 - *twice as high for GLBs*
Cocaine use before age 13 - *14 times as high for GLBs*
Use of inhalants - *2 1/2 times as high for GLBs*
Ever had sexual intercourse - *twice as high for GLBs*
Sexual contact against will - *three times as high for GLBs*

Additionally, the suicide rate is acknowledged to be higher among gay teens than other teens. Studies also show that there are more psychiatric disorders found among homosexually-oriented people (NARTH, pp. 3-4).

The overwhelming results of scientific studies further demonstrate that homosexuality develops through a combination of family, biological, and social influences, reinforced by a series of choices made by each individual over the years. Some gay researchers seek to dispute this, but even the renowned Dr. Robert Spitzer, who was responsible for removing "homosexuality" from the list of psychological disorders, now acknowledges that some people do change their sexual orientation.

I object to the public schools becoming the vehicle for social engineering in our State. I do not believe it is the proper role of the Board of Education to push the agenda of philosophies and programs that advance controversial moral viewpoints. Once the schools enter into such moral debates, there will be inevitable problems and controversies. Public school curricula should avoid engaging in social debate on controversial moral issues, of which homosexuality is certainly one.

If the schools ignore the wisdom of engaging in the debate of moral/social issues, then they should at least scrutinize their programs, their conduct and their language to be sure that there is sound and scientific support for official school words and actions. And in applying this standard to current proposals to educate public school children (grades K through 12) about protecting gay students from harassment, scientific studies

And there is no reputable scientific study that proves that gays are born that way. In the early 90's, Hamer and LaVay suggested that their studies showed that there may be a genetic cause of homosexuality, but neither their studies nor any subsequent studies have proved such a link. To the contrary, studies have demonstrated that multiple factors, including environment, behavior, exposure to early sexual stimulation and choices are significant factors in developing homosexual orientation.

Thus, if the State School Board is to use reputable, scientific data to support the action it takes with regards to teaching about homosexuality, it would be derelict to do anything that would encourage homosexual identification or homosexual conduct.

I will shortly send the Board a packet with additional reports and studies that support the representations I am making in this letter. However, initially, I am enclosing the brochure from NARTH that I previously identified, as well as an article I wrote in *Constitutional Law Updates* on this issue.

If you are interested, I would be happy to discuss this matter with the board. Furthermore, I can refer you to Dr. A. Dean Byrd, a psychologist who has treated approximately 300 males who wanted to repress or eliminate the same-sex erotic attraction that they were experiencing. I believe that Dr. Byrd would be happy to communicate with you directly about these issues, if you would choose to seek his input.

Having said all of the above, this does not mean that the harassment of any school youth should be condoned. Harassment of students should not be condoned or tolerated. The ridiculing of one who is struggling with homosexual issues is not the right thing to do. But teaching that homosexual orientation is acceptable is not the answer, either. There is no reason to encourage homosexual conduct. Harassment can be addressed without encouraging the debilitating and dangerous lifestyle that homosexual conduct involves.

Very truly yours,
C. Paul Smith, Attorney