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Reply to**Department of Federal Affairs**

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May 19, 2015

The Honorable Ted Lieu
U.S. House of Representatives
415 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lieu:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of more than 62,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I write to express our support for the *Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act*.

All children and adolescents deserve the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and supportive environment. "Conversion" or "reparative therapy" is never indicated for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth; therapy is not effective and may be harmful to LGBTQ individuals by increasing internalized stigma, distress, and depression.¹ The AAP supports your efforts through the *Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act* to prohibit the provision or advertising of "conversion" or "reparative therapy" as an unfair and deceptive practice.

Homophobia and heterosexism inherent in conversion therapy can contribute to health disparities as marginalization negatively affects the health, mental health, and education of those who experience it. Struggles with self-image and self-esteem result in significant health disparities for sexual minority youth related to depression and suicidality, substance abuse, social anxiety, altered body image, and other mental health issues.

The AAP is focused on meeting three of every child and adolescent's most basic needs: sound nutrition, nurturing relationships, and safe environments. We are pleased to support the *Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act* because it will protect sexual minority youth from the harms of "conversion" or "reparative" therapy. If the AAP can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Tamar Magarik Haro in our Washington, DC office at 202-347-8600 or at tharo@aap.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP".

Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP
President

SGH/mrc

¹ AAP Committee on Adolescence. Policy Statement: Office-Based Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth. *Pediatrics*, 2013; 132; 198-203.