



School Social Work Association of America
3001 Veazey Terrace, NW • Suite 825
Washington, DC 20008

May 18, 2015

The Honorable Ted Lieu
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lieu:

The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) is pleased to be counted as a strong supporter of the *Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act* (TFPA). School social workers serve as advocates for LGBTQ youth in the school setting and provide a "safe haven" for students as they deal with issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. School social workers also work with students and their families to assist them in getting appropriate mental health services, as necessary, in the community.

SSWAA members oppose any efforts to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. The practice of conversion therapy has been rejected by mainstream medical and mental health organizations as both ineffective and damaging. Such therapy, especially when used with young people, can result in significant mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicide.

We appreciate and applaud Representative Lieu's work in California and now in the U.S. Congress to protect individuals from for-profit conversion therapy practitioners. Instead, SSWAA believes schools and communities should ensure appropriate services, including school social work and other mental health services provided by trained qualified professionals, to assist youth and adults in addressing gender identity and sexual orientation issues.

SSWAA would be pleased to serve as a resource as this bill moves forward.

Rebecca Kunkel, LMSW
Executive Director