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Delegate Hope Statement on Legislation Prohibiting "Conversion Therapy" in Virginia

Richmond - Today, Delegate Patrick A. Hope (D-Arlington) held a press conference in support of HB 427. Delegate Hope introduced HB 427, a bill that would prohibit performing conversion therapy (also call "reparation therapy") on minors by a licensed health care professional. Joining Delegate Hope were advocates from Alliance for Progressive Values, National Association of Social Workers – Virginia Chapter, Equality Virginia, a Virginia School Psychologist as well as a victim who testified as to their personal experiences with conversion therapy.

At the press conference, Delegate Hope said, "Conversion therapy is based on the false assumption that homosexuality is a mental disorder or a sin. Well, it is not. There is no on/off switch to sexual orientation."

Delegate Hope continued, "It is very clear that organized medicine maintains that sexual orientation is not changeable, that conversion therapies do irreparable harm, and that

conversion therapies should not be practiced in the Commonwealth of Virginia."

Delegate Hope concluded, "I believe our government has the duty and an obligation to, at a minimum, protect our children from the dangers of conversion therapy. This bill seeks to do just that."

Joining Delegate Hope were Senators Dance and Surovell. "I am proud to patron SB 267 that seeks to prohibit conversion therapy in Virginia. This is a common sense approach to protect our children and our leaders of tomorrow from unnecessary conversion tactics", said Senator Rosalyn R. Dance (D)-Petersburg.

Senator Scott Surovell continued that "Conversion therapy is wrong. It is an unfortunate practice attempt to "cure" children of their natural sexual orientation and gender identity. Numerous studies show that LGBT children who are exposed to this practice have a significantly higher incidence of substance abuse, depression, homelessness and suicide. Just as we no longer allow doctors to use leeches and bleeding to cure fevers, Virginia needs to bans this dangerous practice and protect our children.'

Patrick A. Hope is a Member of the Virginia General Assembly as the Delegate from the 47th District representing part of Arlington County. He serves on the House Health, Welfare, and Institutions, Courts of Justice, and Militia, Police and Public Safety Committees.

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