

June 29, 2007

American Psychological Association
Board of Directors
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242

To the Board of Directors of the American Psychological Association:

As professional practitioners and leaders of the undersigned organizations collectively representing more than 20 million clients, students, congregants and constituents, we have reviewed the "Call for Nominations for the Board of Directors Task Force on Appropriate Responses to Sexual Orientation." We commend the American Psychological Association for acting to develop ethical and helpful procedures to assist same-sex attracted people when engaged in therapy and counseling.

At the same time, we are writing to express some concern that the mission of the task force may not recognize same-sex attracted persons who also have solid and unwavering religious commitments which lead them to avoid homosexual behavior. Such persons frequently experience significant religious, spiritual and emotional distress and as a consequence seek psychological therapy.

We strongly believe that psychologists can offer a valuable service if they respect the religious commitments of their clients to the same degree that they respect sexual orientation diversity. After examining this call for nominations, it is not clear that the Task Force has been charged to consider religious diversity in framing appropriate responses to same-sex attraction when the client objects to homosexual behavior on religious grounds.

We recognize that the APA is engaged in a process that may result in crafting recommendations for psychologists who work with clients having religious conflicts with homosexual behavior that respects their religious identification. We encourage safe and ethical practices that allow clients to live according to their religious values. We believe that psychologists should assist clients to develop lives they value, even if that means they decline to identify as homosexual.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that the Board of Directors consider one of two options.

1. Expand the charge of the current Task Force to include recommendations for psychologists that respect religious identity and the client's right to construct his life around religious teachings in contrast to sexuality.
2. Form a new and separate task force whose charge would be to provide recommendations for psychologists who work with clients experiencing religious conflict over sexuality.

We consider it a foundational principle that respect be afforded to clients who determine that their religious teachings forbid homosexual conduct and construct their lives accordingly. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The undersigned individual professionals and organizational representatives

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