



Family Watch International

Promoting Family Based Solutions to World Problems

June 28, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives
House Committee on Energy & Commerce, Health Subcommittee

Chairwoman Eshoo and members of the subcommittee,

Family Watch International is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that disseminates research-based materials to help governments and responsible citizens worldwide to understand the implications of legislation and policy that will affect families.

We are grateful your subcommittee will be considering the important mental health implications of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on June 30. We write, however, to express concern with a portion of one of the bills you are considering that is unrelated to that laudable goal and, in fact, would constitute a significant overreach of the role of Congress and promote policies that are harmful to the therapist-client relationship.

Section 303 of H.R. 5469, the “Pursuing Equity in Mental Health Act,” targets so-called “conversion therapy.” This section, of course, is totally unrelated to mental health concerns raised by the pandemic. Perhaps it is meant as a way of signaling official disapproval of an individual’s choice to seek a therapist’s help in trying to reconcile the experience of same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria with deeply held values and commitment.

We are attaching a policy brief that explains why this effort is harmful to individuals and to the therapist-client relationship and contravenes important public policies.

We respectfully urge this subcommittee to focus on the important task it has set for itself and to avoid establishing harmful precedent that could undermine rather than enforce mental health.

Sincerely,

Family Watch International