



Washington legislature approves 'ex-gay' therapy ban

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OLYMPIA, WA -- The Washington state legislature has approved a bill that seeks to ban therapies that attempt to alter the sexual orientation or gender identity of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth.

Such therapies go by names such as "conversion therapy," "reparative therapy" or "ex-gay therapy."

The House approved Senate Bill 5722 on Wednesday, sending it back to the Senate, which had previously approved the bill, to vote on amendments added in the House. The final version of the bill cleared the Senate on Saturday. It now heads to the desk of Democratic Governor Jay Inslee.

Under provisions of the bill, therapists who violate the law face fines and the possible revocation or suspension of their license.

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest LGBT rights advocate, called on Inslee to sign the bill into law.

"Children across the Evergreen State deserve to live their lives authentically and should never be subjected to the abusive practice of so-called conversion therapy," HRC Senior Vice President for Policy and Political Affairs JoDee Winterhof said in a statement. "It's time for Washington to join the growing number of states and municipalities who are enacting these critical protections. We thank the state legislators who voted to protect LGBTQ youth from this dangerous practice and now call on Governor Inslee to sign this crucially important legislation."

Connecticut, California, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Illinois, Vermont, New York, Rhode Island, New Mexico and the District of Columbia have enacted similar bans. Similar bills have been introduced this legislative session in New Hampshire, Maryland and Virginia. An increasing number of local municipalities have also enacted similar protections, particularly in Florida.