



For immediate release:

Please contact

Julie Wilensky

BALIF Board Member & BALIF's Conference of California Bar Associations Committee Chair

(510) 839-6824

ccba@balif.org

Jennifer Orthwein

BALIF Board Member

technology@balif.org

Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom Pursues Legislation to Guarantee Hormone Therapy Maintenance for Transgender Inmates

Resolutions Approved by Conference of California Bar Associations; Effort Moves to Sacramento

OCT. 29, 2013 - San Francisco – Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom (BALIF) is pushing for legislation to require county and city jails and state prisons in California to provide prescribed medicines, including hormone therapies, to inmates, which would significantly protect the rights of transgender inmates. Two BALIF-sponsored resolutions on this topic were approved by the Conference of California Bar Associations (CCBA) at the CCBA's annual conference of delegates held October 11-13, 2013. One of the core missions of the CCBA is to help the resolutions approved by the Conference become law. In 2013, sixteen CCBA-sponsored or supported resolutions were approved by the California Legislature and became law.

"We are excited to have the support of so many local bar associations on this important issue," said Elizabeth Pritzker, BALIF board member and CCBA delegate. "In the coming months, we are committed to working with CCBA's lobbyist, as well as with fellow supporters and our local State legislators, to bring this to the California Legislature, testify at legislative hearings, and get a bill enacted into law."

If enacted into law, BALIF's resolutions will significantly increase access to medical care for transgender inmates, for whom there are no policies or regulations at the city and local level to guide correctional and medical personnel for proper evaluation, assessment, and provision of medical care, and who often encounter extreme bias and misunderstanding by correctional and

medical staff. The proposals will also provide an enforcement mechanism for failure to provide adequate medical care, which currently does not exist at the state or local level.

Access to appropriate medical care, including hormones, is necessary to prevent serious medical problems for transgender individuals in prisons and jails. “For transgender individuals, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and attempts, and self-injurious behavior such as cutting and auto-castration are just some of the physical and mental health risks associated with not being able to access adequate and appropriate medical care. These problems are exacerbated as a result of withdrawal from the hormones,” explained Jennifer Orthwein, BALIF board member and pro bono attorney for the Transgender Law Center. “Resistance to providing prescribed hormones often revolves around the belief that treatments for gender identity disorder and gender dysphoria are still experimental. However, we are increasingly seeing this argument fail as hormone treatment has become a widely accepted form of treatment for gender identity disorder and gender dysphoria.”

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About BALIF

Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom (BALIF) is the nation’s oldest and largest bar association of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered persons in the field of law. Founded in 1980, BALIF represents its members’ interests in the wider San Francisco Bay Area. BALIF members and supporters include San Francisco Bay Area judges, lawyers, law students and legal workers.