

# Assemblymember Low Statement on Assembly Bill 2943

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Friday, August 31, 2018

SACRAMENTO — Assemblymember Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley) issued the following statement about the status of **Assembly Bill 2943** ([http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB2943](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2943)):

“Authoring Assembly Bill 2943 is one of the most personal decisions I have made since taking office. As an elected official, I made decisions that discriminated against my very existence in order to support the broader community I represented. I officiated at weddings but, at the time, I could not legally have one of my own. I hosted blood drives but I was prohibited from participating due to the FDA’s discriminatory ban on gay blood donors. I hosted Boy Scouts earning merit badges but as a child I was never able to earn my own.

“As a young person I often found myself confused about my sexual orientation. It was hard to find any mainstream media surrounding the feelings I was having. Gay men were not depicted in movies or TV that I was exposed to. I hid myself and my feelings because I was afraid of what others would think of me. This left me feeling very lost, scared, alone, and even suicidal. I wondered if I could change. Coming out was not an easy experience. Yet, I am grateful my community embraced me as I was, a gay man. Many fellow members of the LGBT community are not as fortunate and do not have the support I did and have been subjected to the harmful and fraudulent practice of conversion therapy.

“I authored Assembly Bill 2943 to ensure a remedy for those who are deceived by this deceptive practice. As the bipartisan bill progressed through the Legislature this year, opposition began to speak out against the legislation. I knew this was an emotionally charged issue, so I spent the past few months traveling up and down the state meeting with a wide variety of faith leaders.

“I was heartened by the conversations. A number of religious leaders denounced conversion therapy and recognized how harmful the practice is while acknowledging it has been discredited by the medical and psychological communities. I left those productive conversations feeling hopeful. I believe every person who attended these meetings left with a greater understanding for the underlying reason and intention of this bill to create a loving and inclusive environment for all. However, I believe there is still more to learn.

“The best policy is not made in a vacuum and in order to advance the strongest piece of legislation, the bill requires additional time to allow for an inclusive process not hampered by legislative deadlines. With a hopeful eye toward the future, I share with you that, despite the support the bill received in the Assembly and Senate, I will not be sending AB 2943 to the Governor this year. I am committed to continuing to work towards creating a policy that best protects and celebrates the identities of LGBT Californians and a model for the nation to look towards.

“It is my obligation as a Legislator to make this difficult decision in the interest of finding common ground. The path towards full equality is a long journey, but a journey best traveled together. I invite you to join me.”

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