

SENATE BILL 1556

By Johnson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;
Title 49 and Title 63, relative to conscientious
objections to the provision of counseling and
therapy.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 22, is amended by adding the following new part:

(a) No counselor or therapist providing counseling or therapy services shall be required to counsel or serve a client as to goals, outcomes, or behaviors that conflict with a sincerely held religious belief of the counselor or therapist; provided, that the counselor or therapist coordinates a referral of the client to another counselor or therapist who will provide the counseling or therapy.

(b) The refusal to provide counseling or therapy services as described in subsection (a) shall not be the basis for:

(1) A civil cause of action;

(2) Criminal prosecution; or

(3) Any other action by this state or a political subdivision of this state to penalize or withhold benefits or privileges, including tax exemptions or governmental contracts, grants, or licenses.

(c) For purposes of this section, "counseling or therapy services":

(1) Means assisting an individual, through the counseling relationship, in a manner intended to facilitate normal human growth and development, using a combination of mental health and human development principles, methods, and

techniques, to achieve mental, emotional, physical, social, moral, educational, spiritual, or career development and adjustment throughout the life span; and

(2) Includes services described in subdivision (c)(1) provided by any person, whether or not such person is licensed, registered, or otherwise regulated by this state.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.