

Nos. 12-144, 12-307

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IN THE

**Supreme Court of the United States**

DENNIS HOLLINGSWORTH, ET AL., *Petitioners*,

v.

KRISTIN M. PERRY, ET AL., *Respondents*.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *Petitioner*,

v.

EDITH SCHLAIN WINDSOR, IN HER CAPACITY AS  
EXECUTOR OF THE ESTATE OF THEA CLARA SPYER,  
ET AL., *Respondents*.

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***On Writs of Certiorari to the United States  
Court of Appeals for the Ninth and Second  
Circuits***

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**Amicus Curiae Brief of Parents and Friends of  
Ex-Gays & Gays in Support of Hollingsworth  
and Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group of the  
U.S. House of Representatives Addressing the  
Merits and Supporting Reversal.**

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**QUESTIONS PRESENTED**

***Hollingsworth, et al. v. Perry, et al.***

Whether the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits the State of California from defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

***United States v. Windsor, et al.***

Whether Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, 1 U.S.C. § 7, violates the equal protection component of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

QUESTIONS PRESENTED .....i

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES .....iv

INTEREST OF AMICUS CURIAE .....1

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT .....1

ARGUMENT .....3

I. Sexual orientation is not an immutable characteristic “determined solely by the accident of birth” and, thus, cannot be a suspect class .....3

II. Government authorities and other organizations recognize ex-gays as a group, which undermines the assertion that sexual orientation is immutable .....4

III. The life stories of thousands of ex-gays evidences conclusively that sexual orientation is not an immutable characteristic .....6

    A. Story of Richard Cohen, M.A.....7

    B. Story of Alan Medinger .....13

    C. Story of Kristin (Johnson) Tremba, M.Div. ....19

D. Story of Brenna Kate Simonds .....	22
CONCLUSION .....	27

## TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

<b>Cases</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
<i>Frontiero v. Richardson</i> , 411 U.S. 677 (1973).....	3, 4
<i>Gomez v. Perez</i> , 409 U.S. 535 (1973).....	3
<i>Graham v. Richardson</i> , 403 U.S. 365 (1971).....	3
<i>Lyng v. Castillo</i> , 477 U.S. 635 (1986) .....	3
<i>McLaughlin v. Florida</i> , 379 U.S. 184 (1964) .....	3
<i>Oyama v. California</i> , 332 U.S. 633 (1948) .....	3
<i>Parham v. Hughes</i> , 441 U.S. 347 (1979) .....	3
<i>Perry v. Schwarzenegger</i> , 704 F. Supp. 2d 921 (N.D. Cal. 2010).....	1
<i>PFOX v. Government of the District Office of Human Rights</i> , No. 2008 CA 003662, slip. op. (D.C. June 26, 2009) .....	5
<i>Plyler v. Doe</i> , 457 U.S. 202 (1982) .....	3

<i>Quiban v. Veterans Administration</i> , 928 F.2d 1154 (D.C. Cir. 1991) .....	3
<i>Reed v. Reed</i> , 404 U.S. 71 (1971) .....	3
<i>Schweiker v. Wilson</i> , 450 U.S. 221 (1981) .....	4

### **Other Materials**

District of Columbia Superior Court orders the D.C. Office of Human Rights to recognize ex-gays as a protected class for purposes of sexual orientation nondiscrimination (June 26, 2009), (<http://pfox.org/Court-Rules-Sexual-Orientation-Laws-Include-Former-Homosexuals.html>).....5

Montgomery County Maryland public schools superintendent acknowledges the contributions of an ex-gay representative on the district's Citizens Advisory Committee for Family Life and Human Development (2011) (<http://pfox-exgays.blogspot.com/2011/10/letter-posted.html>).....5

NEA recognizes Ex-Gay Educators' Caucus (<http://nea-exgay.org/about/>).....6

*Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, No. 3:09-2292-VRW (N.D. Cal.), Proponents' Summary Judgment Br. 38-43, ECF No. 172-1 at 57-62 .....

PepsiCo's Corporate Counsel issues opinion memorandum on December 28, 2012 confirming ex-gays are protected from workplace sexual orientation discrimination (<http://pfox.org/CivilRights.pdf>).....6

U.S. Department of Education's former Assistant Secretary of Safe and Drug Free Schools Kevin Jennings agrees on June 8, 2011 that ex-gays should not be discriminated against during outreach efforts for students with unwanted same-sex attractions (<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/departing-safe-schools-czar-met-with-pfox-to-discuss-ex-gays-123447044.html>).....5

**INTEREST OF AMICUS CURIAE<sup>1</sup>**

*Amicus* Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays & Gays (“PFOX”) is a national non-profit organization that has supported, since its inception, many thousands of families of individuals with unwanted same-sex attraction who have made the personal decision to leave homosexuality. PFOX advocates for the ex-gay community and educates the public about sexual orientation. PFOX appears as *amicus* to address the purported immutability of homosexuality, which is relevant to whether this Court should declare that sexual orientation is a new suspect class. PFOX affirms that sexual orientation is a transient, personal characteristic, and that individuals can and do change their sexual orientation.

**SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT**

In *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, the district court’s finding of fact No. 46 states:

Individuals do not generally choose their sexual orientation. No credible evidence supports a finding that an individual may, through conscious decision, therapeutic intervention or any other method, change his or her sexual orientation.

*Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, 704 F. Supp. 2d 921, 966 (N.D. Cal. 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> No counsel for a party authored this brief in whole or in part, and no counsel or party made a monetary contribution to the preparation or submission of this brief. Letters from all parties consenting to the filing of this brief have been submitted to the Clerk.

This brief confirms the growing recognition of the ex-gay community by the courts, government bodies, and business entities and presents the real-life, personal stories of four individuals who have done exactly what the district court wrongly concluded was impossible: they chose to change their orientation and now live in opposite-sex relationships despite having been deeply entrenched in same-sex relationships. The stories demonstrate that, in fact, sexual orientation is not immutable—either in the sense that it is a trait determined solely by “accident of birth” or in the sense that it cannot be changed—but is a transient, personal characteristic that can and does change.

The issue is important because a finding that sexual orientation is immutable could lead this Court to declare it a “suspect class” for purposes of the Equal Protection Clause, which is unwarranted. Such a declaration could improperly subject state laws or state Constitutional provisions like Proposition 8 and Congressional Statutes like DOMA to “strict scrutiny” rather than the existing, legally appropriate, “rational basis” review.

This brief does not detail the extensive medical and scientific evidence corroborating that sexual orientation is changeable and mutable, as that issue is thoroughly briefed by *Amicus* Dr. Paul McHugh, M.D., University Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Rather, this brief personalizes the scientific and medical evidence through biographical stories representing the actual experiences of many thousands of ex-gays.

## ARGUMENT

**I. Sexual orientation is not an immutable characteristic “determined solely by the accident of birth” and, thus, cannot be a suspect class.**

As expounded in Professor McHugh’s brief, sexual orientation fails this Court’s standard for heightened scrutiny because it is not immutable. Every class to which the Supreme Court has applied heightened scrutiny is defined by an immutable characteristic. *Parham v. Hughes*, 441 U.S. 347, 351 (1979) (citing *McLaughlin v. Florida*, 379 U.S. 184 (1964) (race); *Oyama v. California*, 332 U.S. 633 (1948) (national origin); *Graham v. Richardson*, 403 U.S. 365 (1971) (alienage); *Gomez v. Perez*, 409 U.S. 535 (1973) (illegitimacy); *Reed v. Reed*, 404 U.S. 71 (1971) (gender)). Moreover, the Supreme Court has refused to apply heightened scrutiny to classes that are not marked by an immutable characteristic. *E.g.*, *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 220 (1982) (undocumented aliens); *Lyng v. Castillo*, 477 U.S. 635, 639 (1986) (close relatives). The Court’s jurisprudence makes clear that immutability is a necessary condition for recognizing a new protected class.

The Court’s precedents teach that immutability denotes a characteristic “determined solely by the accident of birth.” *Frontiero v. Richardson*, 411 U.S. 677, 686 (1973). As then-Judge Ginsburg explained, “the ‘immutable characteristic’ notion . . . does not mean, broadly, something done that cannot be undone. Instead, it is a trait ‘determined solely by accident of birth.’” *Quiban v. Veterans*

*Administration*, 928 F.2d 1154, 1160 n.13 (D.C. Cir. 1991) (quoting *Schweiker v. Wilson*, 450 U.S. 221, 229 n. 11 (1981)).

Far from being an immutable characteristic determined at birth like race or gender, sexual orientation is a complex and amorphous phenomenon that defies consistent and uniform definition. The evidence embodied in this brief adds to the scholarly record amassed by Professor McHugh to show that, however defined, sexual orientation can shift over time and does so for a significant number of people.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, many people freely choose to change their sexual orientation. Thus, while the nature and determinants of sexual orientation are not fully understood, orientation is ***mutable*** for purposes of Equal Protection analysis, as it is not “determined solely by accident of birth.” *Frontiero v. Richardson*, 411 U.S. 677, 686 (1973) (plurality).

## **II. Government authorities and other organizations recognize ex-gays as a group, which undermines the assertion that sexual orientation is immutable.**

In addition to the compelling personal stories of ex-gays discussed below, a growing number of

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<sup>2</sup> The district court’s Finding No. 46 in *Hollingsworth* that “No credible evidence supports a finding that an individual may, through conscious decision, therapeutic intervention or any other method, change his or her sexual orientation” disregards substantial evidence presented to the district court. For evidence presented in *Hollingsworth*, see *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, No. 3:09-2292-VRW (N.D. Cal.), Proponents’ Summary Judgment Br. 38-43, ECF No. 172-1 at 57-62.

governmental authorities and other organizations recognize the existence of ex-gays; that is, that there are individuals who have successfully changed their sexual orientation and are now living as heterosexuals even though they once lived as homosexuals.

In *PFOX v. Government of the District Office of Human Rights*, No. 2008 CA 003662, slip. op. at 12 (D.C. June 26, 2009), the District of Columbia Superior Court ordered the D.C. Office of Human Rights to recognize ex-gays as a protected class for purposes of sexual orientation nondiscrimination (<http://pfox.org/Court-Rules-Sexual-Orientation-Laws-Include-Former-Homosexuals.html>).

Likewise, Kevin Jennings, former Assistant Secretary of Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education, agreed in 2010 that ex-gays should not be discriminated against during outreach efforts for students with unwanted same-sex attractions (<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/departing-safe-schools-czar-met-with-pfox-to-discuss-ex-gays-123447044.html>).

And in 2011, the superintendent of Montgomery County, Maryland public schools, the 17th largest school district in the United States, acknowledged the contributions of an ex-gay representative who served on the district's Citizens Advisory Committee for Family Life and Human Development (<http://pfox-exgays.blogspot.com/2011/10/letter-posted.html>).

On December 28, 2012, PepsiCo, a Fortune 500 company, by and through its legal counsel, acknowledged in a written legal opinion memorandum that its workplace policy against sexual orientation discrimination includes non-

discrimination against former homosexuals as a protected class (<http://pfox.org/CivilRights.pdf>). And every year, the NEA's officially recognized Ex-Gay Educators Caucus participates in and hosts a booth at the National Education Association's conference (<http://nea-exgay.org/about/>).

**III. The life stories of thousands of ex-gays evidences conclusively that sexual orientation is not an immutable characteristic.**

Any assertion that homosexuality is immutable is perhaps best disputed by the existence of a multitude of organizations in the United States and around the world who, like *Amicus*, have helped thousands of men and women leave unwanted homosexuality, change their orientation, and live heterosexual lives.<sup>3</sup> Below are the stories of four

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<sup>3</sup> In addition to *Amicus*, a partial list of the other organizations who in the United States and around the world provide assistance to those desiring to change their orientation is as follows: Courage ([www.couragerc.net](http://www.couragerc.net)); The German Institute for Youth and Society ([www.dijg.de](http://www.dijg.de)); Homosexual Anonymous ([www.ha-fs.org](http://www.ha-fs.org)); International Healing Foundation ([www.comingoutloved.com](http://www.comingoutloved.com)); Jews Offering New Alternatives for Healing, Inc. (<http://jonahweb.org>); National Association For Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) ([www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com)); Restored Hope Network ([www.restoredhopenetwork.com](http://www.restoredhopenetwork.com)); Voices of Change ([www.voices-of-change.org](http://www.voices-of-change.org)); Witness Freedom Ministries (<http://www.witnessfortheworld.org>); Parakaleo ([www.parakaleo.co.uk](http://www.parakaleo.co.uk)); People Can Change (<http://www.peoplecanchange.com>); Positive Alternatives to Homosexuality (PATH) (<http://www.pathinfo.org>); True Freedom Trust (<http://www.truefreedomtrust.co.uk>); VENSER

individuals, two men and two women, each of whom represents many thousands of others who have successfully made this transition. The fact that there are well-adjusted ex-gays clearly demonstrates that sexual orientation is not an immutable characteristic.

#### A. Story of Richard Cohen, M.A.

Richard Cohen, M.A., is an ex-gay who is now married with 3 children. He struggled for much of his life with unwanted same-sex attraction. Richard is the founder of the International Healing Foundation (IHF) and the author of *Coming Out Straight*, *Gay Children Straight Parents*, *Let's Talk About Sex*, and *Alfie's Home*. Richard's journey is found at [www.comingoutloved.com/Richard-Cohens-Story](http://www.comingoutloved.com/Richard-Cohens-Story). Following are excerpts from his story.

From middle school, I began to experience same-sex attractions. . . .

. . . My same-sex desires got stronger with each passing year. I had more sexual experiences with school friends. For them it was a novelty, but for me it was a growing obsession. At the same time, I tried to act "normal," so I had girlfriends. But this growing obsession for a man continued to haunt me.

....

. . . In my first year of college, I had several boyfriends, each lasting several months.

After one visit home, my father wrote a letter that hurt me deeply. At the same time, I felt suffocated by my current boyfriend, Mike. Besides all that, my schoolwork was overwhelming. I decided to take a bottle of Bufferin and end it all. However, I woke up in the middle of the morning sick as a dog, and still alive. I called my sister, who lived nearby. She came over and took me to the emergency room at the hospital where they pumped my stomach and stabilized my condition.

I recovered, continued therapy, went back to school, ended my relationship with Mike, changed my major to theater, and felt a bit more hopeful. In my second year of school, I met Tim, an art major. We would become lovers for the next three years.

....

. . . Since I loved Tim, I wanted to see why he loved . . . Jesus so much. For the first time in my life, I began reading the New Testament. As part of my Jewish upbringing, I was both bar-

mitzvahed and confirmed, studying only the Old Testament.

I had always been on a spiritual quest, trying to find the meaning and purpose of life. I tried so many kinds of faiths and ways: Judaism, Buddhism, and therapies. Then I met Jesus. He was a remarkable individual. In fact, he was the kind of man I had always wanted to be myself. What I admired in him was that his thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds were one. He was a congruent man, the same inside as he was on the outside. He spoke of forgiveness and God's grace. These were new concepts for me. I wanted to be like him. This began my journey as a Christian. . . .

More and more, Tim and I knew that homosexuality was not compatible with God's Word, so we eliminated the physical part of our relationship . . . .

In 1982, Jae Sook and I married . . . . The first few months were wonderful. I told her about what I thought was my homosexual past. Then the problem resurfaced. I felt so much rage toward my wife. I projected onto Jae Sook all the pent-up hostility I had previously felt toward my mother.

. . . At home, Dr. Jekyll turned into Mr. Hyde, a rageaholic. I had become what I vowed I would never be—just like my father. My wife soon became pregnant with our first child. I knew I must begin therapy again. So, in May 1983, while living in New York City, I went to see a noted psychologist. For one year, I attended weekly individual and group sessions.

. . . .

Slowly, my heart began to heal as I grieved the effects of the sexual abuse [from my youth] . . . . However, there was still a deep wound in the pit of my soul. We had had a second child during all this. Jessica was a beautiful girl.

. . . .

. . . I found a . . . friend who was willing to help me heal the homo-emotional wounds of my past. He himself was quite stable and comfortable in his masculinity. . . .

. . . In that instant, the connection between my childhood abuser and I was cut, and I became free for the first time in my life. With that sense of freedom, I sobbed for about an hour in [my friend] David's arms. It was such a release and relief to know that I wasn't responsible for what had

happened and that God had forgiven me. In those moments of release, I found my freedom from same-sex desires. Cutting this neurological connection to the sexual desires freed me from thirty years of relentless pain and an endless pursuit of men.

....

At the same time, I began graduate school to obtain my master's degree in counseling psychology. After graduation . . . I founded the International Healing Foundation. My vision was to establish healing centers throughout the world to help men, women, and children to experience their value as children of God. This is still my vision, as we continue our journey.

I began to give public presentations on the process of transitioning from homosexuality to heterosexuality. I thought that, because of my heart toward the homosexual community, they would see that I was not their enemy, but just presenting another possibility for those who desire to change. I was naive. We received death threats at our home and at my office! We received obscene telephone calls at home with angry, venomous words of threat and accusation. The Gay and Lesbian Task Force of the

mayor's office in Seattle requested that the American Red Cross fire me from my position as an HIV/AIDS educator. Many in the homosexual community have felt threatened by my work. I understand their fears and their pain.

Over the past 21 years, I have traveled extensively throughout the States, giving presentations about the healing of homosexuality on college and university campuses, in churches, in mental health institutions, at therapeutic conferences, and on TV and the radio.

Another blessing occurred 15 years ago. God gave us a precious son, Alfie. He came on the foundation of our (God's) battles and victories. Now, Jae Sook and I and our three children are growing more deeply in love.

I love God with all my heart, mind, and soul. I live to end His suffering and pain. I pray the understanding of same-sex attractions and the treatment plan for recovery that I am about to share is a blessing to you and those whose lives you will touch. I have learned over the past twelve years of counseling hundreds of men, women, and adolescents, and working with thousands of people in healing seminars around the world,

that no matter what issue or issues we are facing in our lives, our wounds all originate from the same sources. . . .<sup>4</sup>

## **B. Alan Medinger's Story**

Alan Medinger is an ex-gay who, after coming out of the homosexual lifestyle twenty five years ago, was married with two daughters and six grandchildren. Alan, who is now deceased, founded Regeneration and authored *Growth into Manhood*. Alan's journey is found at [www.peoplecanchange.com/stories/alan.php](http://www.peoplecanchange.com/stories/alan.php). Following are excerpts from his story.

My journey into homosexuality fits the same pattern that I have seen over and over again in many other men I have worked with. I was an unplanned child, born to parents who would have preferred a girl. My older brother was more athletic and generally fit the "all boy" model far better than I, and somehow, he became Dad's and I became Mom's.

. . . My father was subject to severe depression, so severe that he was under psychiatric care for many years, and on a few occasions had to be hospitalized. He could barely cope with life, much less be the husband and father that we needed him to be. In his

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<sup>4</sup> [www.comingoutloved.com/Richard-Cohens-Story](http://www.comingoutloved.com/Richard-Cohens-Story).

bad times, he drank heavily and he and my mother fought verbally quite often.

My mother's life was difficult, and to a limited extent I became her comfort and confidant. I certainly identified with her more than with my father.

....

I also retreated into a world of fantasy, sexual and otherwise. It became my secure retreat from the pain of life. In a typical fantasy I would be a boy hero leading men into battle, and then when the fighting was over, the men would use me sexually. I both longed for my own manhood and for the manhood of other men.

....

Eventually, these longings for male contact turned sexual. A strong aggressive neighbor boy who was about a year older than I, when he found out I was more than willing to take care of him sexually, was delighted to let me do so. Although my fears of being found out limited my activity, I was homosexually active with other boys from about age 13 through high school.

My sexual activities stopped when I went to college. . . . I believe

that my craving for male contact was at least partially satisfied through all of the activities that I had with my fraternity brothers.

Still, the direction of my sexual desires never changed and my fantasies abated very little. Although I dated some girls, there was never any doubt that my overwhelming desire was for a man.

I was blessed to grow up in a time and culture in which there was no gay alternative lifestyle out there calling me into it. . . . Like so many homosexually oriented men of that time, I would get a job, marry, have children and cope the best I could.

That's exactly what happened. Willa Benson had been my friend from elementary school days. We dated through high school, off and on during college, and two years after college we were married. I told Willa nothing of my homosexual desires . . . .

The first years of marriage went well. We had two daughters and I started to move up in the business world. We were active in our little neighborhood church, and we led an active social life. But gradually, the pressures of career and family started

to build up on me, and at the same time a faulty thyroid gave Willa some emotional problems. My response was to retreat into my old means of finding comfort; homosexual fantasy and pornography, and five years into the marriage, sex with other men.

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For ten years I led the classic double life. Successful in business, vice-president and treasurer of a prestigious Baltimore company, a pillar of my local church. The front was masterfully constructed and maintained. In reality, my life was out of control and my marriage had become a sham. I was drinking heavily, and turned much of my guilt on Willa. We fought frequently. For the last two years of my homosexual activity, I was unable to function sexually in the marriage.

Although I believed in God and had an intellectual acceptance of most of the basics of my religion, my faith seemed to have no impact on my life. I prayed routinely and I did pray that I would be able to stop my homosexual behavior, but I was never aware of any of my prayers being answered. I suppose I prayed the way I did most things, out of duty.

I never justified what I was doing, but I felt powerless to stop it. Gradually sinking into a fatalistic attitude, I saw my life as being on a downward spiral which eventually would cost me my family, my job, maybe even my life, and there was nothing I could do about it.

But God could. Two things happened. Willa, searching for help, got herself into a prayer group. She did not tell them of the exact nature of our problems, but they started praying for me and for our marriage.

Not long after this, a friend at work had a profound religious conversion. As Jim tried to explain to me what had happened, I became certain that he had had a true spiritual experience. Somehow I knew that I could too . . . .

But things were desperate enough that after six or seven weeks of agonizing, on Tuesday, November 26, 1974, I went to an interdenominational meeting with Jim. He didn't know my problem, nor did anyone there. At some point during the evening, I prayed quietly, "God, I give up. My life is a total mess. I can't handle it any more. I don't care what You do; you take over." And He did.

Within a few days, I knew that some profound changes had taken place in me. First of all, I fell head over heels in love with Willa and I desired her physically. My homosexual fantasies that had almost never left me were gone. And most important of all, I knew that Jesus was real, that He loved me, and I was starting to love Him.

A few weeks later, I told Willa the whole truth about my life. . . . Being able to trust me and receive my love came very slowly. A part of the new start in life that we were both given was the birth of our son, Stephen, 18 months after my conversion.

. . . Today, I believe that my need for male friendships are [sic] as normal and healthy as any man's.

. . . .

This process took years, but today I am confident in and at total peace with my manhood.

. . . .

Although not too many people experience change the way I did, everything that happened to me—being set free to love, desexualizing my unmet emotional needs, breaking the power of my addiction, having the deep needs of

my heart for masculine love met by Jesus, and growing into manhood—can happen to any man whose heart is ready to overcome homosexuality. I know this because I have seen it happen hundreds of times.

. . . Our two daughters have grown up, married and provided us with six wonderful grandchildren. Steve, our little child of the promise, grew to be a strong man, was recently married and is teaching school.

Today, 25 years later, if God were to bring me the best looking man in the world, and say, “Here, you can do whatever you want with him.” My response would be, “No thank you, I'm not interested.” . . .<sup>5</sup>

### **C. Story of Kristin Johnson Tremba, M.Div.**

Kristin Johnson Tremba is a former homosexual who is now married with a child. Kristin holds a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University, as well as a Master of Divinity degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She is the author of *Sexual Wholeness in a Broken World*. Her journey is found at [http://pfox.org/Grove City College.pdf](http://pfox.org/Grove%20City%20College.pdf). Following are excerpts from her story.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.peoplecanchange.com/stories/alan.php](http://www.peoplecanchange.com/stories/alan.php).

While my sister was attending [college], I was going to a small liberal arts college in Indiana. My freshman year I had high hopes to have fun at school, make lots of friends find my “calling” in life, and then get married. Instead, I found something unexpected and frightening happening: I was falling in love with my freshman roommate. The feelings I felt for her were the feelings I had hoped to have felt for the guys I had dated in high school. I was overwhelmed and confused and had nowhere to go. . . .

. . . .

. . . My roommate and I lived together all throughout college and one year after college, but we never talked about our feelings for one another or engaged in any physical sexual relationship. Regardless, we were a couple. We were emotionally dependent upon each other (we viewed other people as a threat to our relationship, preferred to spend time alone and were frustrated when this didn’t happen, became angry or depressed when the other withdrew slightly, lost interest in other friendships, and experienced romantic and sexual feelings for the other) . . . .

After college, I entered the Peace Corps, which required me to leave my roommate. This was not easy for either of us. However, on my flight to Albania, I prayed that God would bring a man into my life. Thus began my search for love and the hopes to marry again. I was 23 years old. In Albania, I found myself having sexual feelings for both men and a particular woman as I served as a volunteer. I lost my virginity and became more promiscuous with men.

. . . .

It was not soon after this that I fell into a sexual relationship with a woman who was openly gay, and who pursued me. In my loneliness and neediness for intimacy, I gave in to her and found being with her to meet a deep emotional need inside of me. This relationship continued until I moved to a different state for work. When I heard that she would be coming to live with me, I was euphoric and ready to come “out” of the closet, so to speak. I began telling friends, and I even attended a gay-friendly church, but it all seemed so foreign and unsatisfying . . . .

. . . .

[Ultimately,] God taught me that sexual sin was my attempt to meet legitimate emotional needs in sexually illegitimate ways. He showed me that there were some emotional needs that had not been met in my family relationships growing up, there were some wounds, and so I was attempting to meet these needs and cover these wounds in sexual relationships as an adult. He taught me that there were also things I was born with: a sin nature, a particular temperament, various weaknesses, and a negative body image and negative view of my femininity. He taught me that even though I did not choose all my circumstances and struggles, I could choose to overcome them. I could choose to let God change my life.

. . . .

People ask me, “Do you still struggle with same-sex attraction?” My answer is no, I don’t, but I still struggle with worry and doubt and lots of other things . . . .<sup>6</sup>

#### **D. Story of Brenna Kate Simonds**

Brenna Kate Simonds is a former homosexual who has been married to her husband for eight

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<sup>6</sup> [http://pfox.org/Grove\\_City\\_College.pdf](http://pfox.org/Grove_City_College.pdf).

years. She is the Director of an organization based in Boston, Massachusetts that helps men and women find freedom in their struggle with same-sex attraction. Brenna's journey is found at <http://pfox-exgays.blogspot.com/2013/01/letting-others-help-on-journey.html>. Following are excerpts from her story.

I was born in 1975, the second of two girls. My mother was an alcoholic who stayed home with me and my sister while my father worked long hours. . . . I'd quickly zero in on any themes of abandonment in everything I heard, and I carried those feelings of fear with me into my adulthood.

Eventually, my parents divorced. . . . I began experimenting sexually with girls when I was a young age and this continued until, as a freshman in high school, I found myself physically attracted to my best friend. Before our relationship became physical, it was already emotionally unhealthy. When we began to act out our attraction physically, I became totally dependent on her for my self-worth.

. . . .

At college, it was much easier to be gay. My sexuality was affirmed and accepted. My girlfriend of three-and-a-half years and I broke up during my first semester, but within a year, I met

a much older woman, and we began dating. I dropped out of college and moved across the country to live with her. During the time we lived together, I became even more involved with the gay community. I spoke out for gay rights and further embraced my lesbian identity.

....

After three months, [my girlfriend] said to me, "Listen—you can't be a Christian and be gay. The Bible says you must either be hot or cold—one or the other, but not lukewarm." She was quoting Scripture to me! With that, she ended our relationship.

After that, I just threw my arms up into the air, saying "Fine, God! I don't want to live like this. Please - take these desires away from me." And in many ways, He did. My attraction to women lessened greatly.

However, I soon realized that the events and circumstances of my life that led me in the direction of the lesbian lifestyle had not changed. I knew I needed help. .

. . . I somehow got my hands on a copy of "Pursuing Sexual Wholeness" by Andrew Comiskey. I just devoured that

book and applied many of the principles presented to my life. I also opened up to my Christian friends about my struggle and asked for accountability. I committed to a few women that when I faced moments of temptation, I would call them, so that they could check in with me later and pray for me.

....

I met a man through a ministry I was involved with, and he was interested in me! As ideal as the situation appeared, dating was much more difficult than I thought it would be! If dating was this difficult, I could only imagine that marriage would be exponentially more so. I recognized that though I could continue to survive as I was, I wouldn't thrive without additional help. At that difficult point, I made the decision to start seeing a Christian counselor.

....

Looking back, I realize I needed my entire thought life to be transformed, but my patterns of thinking were so deeply ingrained that I couldn't have identified them by myself. It wasn't simply that I had moments of feeling worthless and

unlovable; in the core of my being, I was sure it was true.

. . . .

Since I had been mistreated and abused by several men I had allowed to get close to me, I had a very difficult time trusting Roy and letting him in to my world. She [counselor] helped me realize that Roy was a safe person, and that I needed to be willing to trust him and be vulnerable with him. Later, when Roy & I were engaged to be married, she helped us to prepare for that transition by meeting with us together.

I believe that the majority of people who struggle with same-sex attraction are in that same place. Though they may be able to survive the struggle, only receiving support from a few groups, or by attending a support group, they could really thrive if they were willing to receive the intense, one-on-one help that therapy offers. Some people in recovery are hesitant to see a therapist or a counselor because they think that counseling is for the “world,” that they just need to pray harder, expecting God to reveal everything to them personally and healing them in their prayer closets.

....

My journey to recovery has been long and arduous, but more than worth it. God has helped me in many ways along the path to recovery. Therapy played a key role in expediting my experience of God's healing in my life. My own therapy taught me how to help others experience their own journey of healing and restoration.<sup>7</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Same-sex attraction is not an immutable characteristic determined at birth, like race or gender. The growing public acknowledgment of ex-gays and the personal testimonies of the individuals included above clearly show that same-sex attraction is a phenomenon that can and does change. Homosexual sexual orientation is not pre-determined and fixed by "the accident of birth," but is in fact subject to alteration and change. Therefore, *Amicus* asks this honorable Court to not declare that sexual orientation is a new suspect class.

For the foregoing reasons, this Court should reverse the decisions of United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth and Second Circuits.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://pfox-exgays.blogspot.com/2013/01/letting-others-help-on-journey.html>

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