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Sorry, no gay gene

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A large number of Americans, including the elected politicians who write laws and set policies, have been conned into believing that homosexuals are born that way and that what they do to and with each other is as American as motherhood and apple pie.

It is one thing for the ordinary American to embrace deviancy, having been deluded by lies, myths, propaganda and junk science; it is another thing for elected officials to spearhead a vicious, open assault on American society and some of its most cherished institutions based on such delusions.

As one of a hundred available examples to illustrate the point, The New Jersey Supreme Court has just ruled that the Boy Scouts of America broke the law when it threw out an openly homosexual scout leader. New Jersey has state anti-discrimination laws that specifically bar discrimination based on sexual preference.

What we are witnessing is a shameless and perverse use of government power. We need to understand why this is happening and what is the thinking that rationalizes it. This can be said: In a litany of lies about homosexuality, the most fundamental lie is the lie that homosexuals are born that way. It is a lie repeated over and over again because it has a basic appeal to the American sense of fairness and tolerance.

Let's begin with a desperately needed reality check: There

is no scientific proof that homosexuality is genetic. There is no scientific basis for viewing homosexuality as anything other than an acquired sexual dysfunction.

The widely respected Dr. Joel Gelernter of Yale University was quoted in an article in "Science" as making this observation about various studies trying to link genes with complex human behavior: "All were announced with great fanfare; all were greeted unskeptically in the popular press; all are now in disrepute."

Among the studies in "disrepute" is the study of the brains of 35 male cadavers by Salk Institute researcher Simon LeVay. He reported that the cluster of neurons called INAH3 in the hypothalamus was generally smaller in 19 known homosexuals than in 16 heterosexuals.

Unfortunately, there were glaring problems with this study: The sample was too small; the sexuality of the 16 subjects classified as heterosexuals is suspect -- six of them died of AIDS. In advanced stages, AIDS itself is known to cause clinical insanity and might well affect brain structure; and finally, it has not been established that the area of the hypothalamus being studied has anything to do with sexual orientation.

Despite this lack of credibility, the media hailed it as a breakthrough in the quest to find a biological link with homosexual behavior.

In 1993, Dean Hamer of the National Cancer Institute studied 40 pairs of homosexual brothers, and found that 33 of the pairs had DNA markers in the same chromosome region called Xq28.

By happy chance, the study was released on the same day President Clinton was scheduled to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military. Surely, that had nothing to do with the unusual zeal with which the media jumped on the study and hyperventilated about it.

As examples, Mutual News Radio reported that researchers "have isolated a gene found only in gay males." Newsweek published a cover story titled "Gay Gene?" The Wall Street Journal posted the headline "Research Points Toward a Gay Gene." And numerous eminent newspapers announced new proof that homosexuals are born, not made.

Alas, the study has been totally discredited. The sample size was inadequate. There was no control group of heterosexuals where markers might or might not have been found. And finally, the study was later repeated by George Ebers of the University of Western Ontario, with findings that directly contradict Hamer's conclusions. Ebers used a much-larger sample than Hamer, and

reported results that "do not support an x-linked gene underlying male homosexuality."

In an earlier study of identical twins, psychologist Michael Bailey of Northwestern University and psychiatrist Richard Pillard of Boston University reported that if one of the twins was homosexual, the other was also homosexual 52 percent of the time. This finding sheds light on the claim that being homosexual is like being black. Imagine what black parents would think if you told them that if they had identical twins and one of them was black, there was a 52 percent chance the other would also be black.

The bottom line is this: Homosexuals are made, and they can be unmade. This is the truth about themselves that they desperately do not want to hear -- that they have the power to change. This is the truth that psychiatrists and psychologists need to acknowledge. This is the truth that the American people need to know and that politicians need to understand.

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