



Judd A. and Marjorie Weinberg  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Northwestern University

Department of Psychology  
2029 Sheridan Road  
Evanston, Illinois 60208-2710



NORTHWESTERN  
UNIVERSITY

April 2, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in strong and heartfelt support of Marshall Burns' research on consenting juveniles' sexual interactions.

As background, I am an expert in human sexuality generally (more specifically, I study variation in human sexual orientations). I taught human sexuality for two decades, and so I know the kinds of issues that people struggle with. I am the founder and moderator of an important discussion listserv for the top sex researchers in the world (and which Marshall Burns is a member of). Finally, I have known people caught up in the kind of tragedies that this research addresses.

I believe we are in a bad state in our culture with respect to the issues that *Consenting Juveniles* addresses. On the one hand, we want to protect our children. (I have children and certainly wanted to protect them when they were on the verge of sexual awakening.) On the other hand, we are squeamish, moralistic, irrational, and reliant on mistaken beliefs. This has led to an abundance of tragic cases in which sexually mature and willing and seemingly responsible individuals who include a member below (a certain state's) age of sexual consent are thrown into our severe legal system. Although some people may agree in theory with the way we do things, I think that most would be horrified by the punishment inflicted on some, if not all, of the cases that Marshall Burns has interviewed.

I understand that many psychologists (or more generally, mental health-related academics and practitioners) may be concerned not to endorse research that is *too* controversial, and I believe this project is not. At the same time, it is controversial enough so that Marshall Burns has gone where few if any academics have yet to go. It is a fascinating, urgently needed, heartrending project, and I support it completely.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Bailey  
Professor