

I am Saren Craig, the President of Oregon SAIGE. I am a professional counselor associate registered with OBLPCT. I am part of the LGBTQ+ community and have directly experienced conversion therapy.

I asked Representative Nosse to sponsor this bill to ban the practice of Conversion Therapy because it is not healthcare.

I was born in the Missouri Ozarks to conservative parents. I was not surrounded by a community that was accepting. Immediately following high school I attended a religious college with a lifestyle statement against same sex relationships.

During my time there, I went to my college counselor, an LPC, for anxiety and depression. She said that my history of being abused caused me to be gay. She believed that being LGBTQ+ was pathological and sinful. She crafted narratives based on her own beliefs which reinforced internalized homophobia and transphobia. Instead of decreasing my symptoms, I got worse. I was extremely isolated, and under a lot of pressure to conform to the college's homophobic culture.

LGBTQ people are born into every type of family all around the world, and we don't often have other people like us in our own families. Clients are extremely vulnerable when seeking services. Regardless of where they are, clients should be able to trust that they will be getting scientifically based care from state licensed and regulated healthcare professionals, and not psychological abuse.

I moved to Oregon to find a more accepting environment and was surprised to find counselors with these same affiliations promoting conversion therapy. Oregon is not immune to homophobic or transphobic influences. I want to make sure no one has to experience this type of abuse under the hands of a healthcare professional.

All leading professional medical and mental health associations have rejected "conversion therapy" as a legitimate medical treatment; however, 7% of LGBTQ people reported experiencing some form of conversion therapy. Out of that 7% an estimated 36.5% of LGBTQ+ people, and 90% of trans people have reported receiving this treatment from a healthcare professional. SOGICE (sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts) violate many important ethical principles, the foremost of which is: "First, do no harm."

The total economic burden associated with SOGICE was estimated to be \$9.23 billion annually. An economic evaluation published in JAMA Pediatrics estimated that LGBTQ youth subjected to SOGICE incur \$83,366 in lifetime excess health care costs, primarily associated with suicidality, anxiety, severe psychological distress, depression and substance abuse. (Anna

Forsythe, et al. (March 2022). Humanistic and Economic Burden of Conversion Therapy Among LGBTQ Youths in the United States, JAMA Pediatrics.)

Passing this legislation will curtail the number of professionals from practicing SOGICE and will give people who experience this treatment greater legal standing if they do experience this barbaric treatment. This legislation is especially important as we have moved into an era of greater conflict surrounding LGBTQ+ equality.