

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chair Goodwin, Vice-Chair Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

As a gay high school student who grew up in the deeply religious south, I wholeheartedly support HB 2458. Growing up, I struggled with my sexual orientation and felt immense pressure to change who I was in order to fit into my community's expectations. This struggle led me to seek out conversion therapy, which only made me feel worse about myself and perpetuated harmful and dangerous ideas about my identity.

HB 2458 would prevent this harmful practice from being performed by licensed professionals, and I believe this is an important step in the right direction. No one should be told that they need to change who they are in order to be accepted and loved, and it is unacceptable for licensed professionals to participate in practices that perpetuate such damaging messages.

As someone who has experienced the pain of conversion therapy, I strongly urge you to support this bill. This is not just a political issue, it is a matter of basic human dignity and respect. Every person deserves to live their life as their authentic self without the fear of harm or discrimination.

In conclusion, I implore you to pass HB 2458 and help create a more inclusive and accepting world for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sincerely,

*Devon Lawson-McCourt*

Vida, Oregon