Submitter: Timothy Lafolette

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

When I was 20 years old, I started going to a conversion therapy, thinking that I could change my sexuality to fit in with what my family, church, and school wanted for me. Unfortunately, it just ended up making me feel like I was a failure, and made me feel that not only was I a failure because I was gay, but I was also a failure because I couldn't heal the way that they told me I was supposed to heal. Looking back at the experiences now, as a mental health professional, I can see that many of the experiences were designed to get us to admit to things about our family of origin and about ourselves that weren't true. For years during and after the conversion therapy, I prayed to die in my sleep so that I didn't have to continue to experience the mental and emotional pain and internal conflict as a result of the conversion therapy.
It took years of my life, a supportive community, as well as evidence-based talk therapy to help undo the emotional damage.
In mental health and medical treatment we need to keep to the principle of "do no harm", and I don't believe we can say that this type of treatment is not doing harm. It certainly harmed me.