

February 12th, 2023

From: Sheila Somers, LPC

To: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB 2458

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in Milwaukie, Oregon. I provide counseling support to individuals and couples and some are LGBTQ+. Personally, I am also a lesbian and someone who has benefited from having supportive family and sought out communities and therapeutic processes who were affirmative and accepting. My spouse and I have been together for 22 years and are supported by our families of different cultures which have helped us thrive in our lives and careers.

I work from an attachment theory which focuses on the importance of a safe haven and connection with significant attachment figures. When people grow up who are LGBTQ+ and experience rejection by family members, friends, therapists, religious figures and/or other authority figures this creates an attachment injury and trauma. Conversion therapy needs to be banned because it causes significant injury to a person's psychological state, view of self and view of others in relationships.

A co-founder of Emotionally Focused Therapy, Dr. Sue Johnson teaches about the human need for a safe haven and a secure base. She uses an acronym A.R.E -Are you accessible, responsive and engaged. "Are you there for me?" Therapists and therapeutic support processes need to be open and supportive and accessible, responsive and engaged while accepting the client as they are and helping them build this secure relationship within themselves, with a safe attachment figure with the therapist and with other relationships they have with loved ones, work relationships and community members.

Please support the passage of HB 2458.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila Somers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Somers Counseling LLC
Sheila Somers, LPC, Member