

Submitter: Heidi Montez

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Heidi Montez and I am in support of HB 2458.

Conversion “therapy” is not therapy, it is an abusive practice that harms adults, children, young people and families which is why as an early childhood educator, a cis-hetero parent, and a family counselor in training I am in support of HB 2458. There is no place for a discriminatory, dangerous, non-evidence based practice in the helping professions and in our communities. Discrimination and targeting of LGBTQIA people greatly increases the risk of suicide, depression and substance use disorders. Supporters of sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts (SOGICE) often mask their desire to discriminate against people as protected under free speech but just because conversion therapy can be practiced through the use of words does not mean it is safeguarded by the First Amendment.

In my own life I have seen my own parent beg and try to convince my sibling to "try out" being heterosexual before "deciding" to be queer. To my sibling, a young adult at the time, this message was received as "please be a different person" or "please don't exist". This attitude was enormously harmful to my sibling's mental, emotional and physical well being and resulted in family estrangement and much suffering. This is the message that conversion therapy gives: Here is a way you can not exist.

The mere existence of these types of discriminatory and dangerous conversion efforts sends that same message and this is why I support a full ban on the use of the harmful, pseudoscientific practice known as “conversion therapy”, “reparative therapy”, SOIGICE or other similar terminology.

For the sake of all of my preschool students, friends, family members, colleagues, elders and ancestors, please support the passing of HB 2458 to protect your and my communities.

Respectfully,
Heidi J Montez