

Submitter: Carey Paris

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

Hello,

Thank you for considering my comment. I strongly oppose this bill because I am the mother of a teenage daughter who identifies as transgender and has been suffering from anxiety and depression among other comorbidities. I am unable to find a psychologist who is able to take an exploratory approach that takes into account her other issues due to the conversion therapy laws in my state. The role of a therapist is not to affirm and encourage transgender identities in their clients. A therapist should be able to listen and consider the whole person while addressing all of their concerns and not be forced to focus only on gender. By conflating the therapeutic process with conversion therapy - (it's not!) these laws are harming already distressed kids and forcing them down a path that can lead them to become more confused and take steps to medicalize themselves. Because the medical changes can be permanent it's very important that honest conversations can happen between clients and therapists around choices that can be made and the consequences of those choices. If we don't allow those conversations to happen, we are doing a disservice to the child and their family. It's not the job of a therapist to agree with everything their client says and there is no other psychological condition that would call for that. Conversion therapy is not happening- and a truly therapeutic process can't happen if therapists aren't allowed to explore their clients' feelings about all aspects of their life- not just a transgender identity!

Thank you.