

Submitter: Elise Himes

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

As a licensed therapist (LPC) and an Oregonian, I am imploring the board to support the passage of HB 2458. I have seen firsthand the deeply entrenched harm and damage done by conversion “therapy”. The legacy of shame, traumatization, and loss of sense of self as a result of conversion therapy practices is immense, and takes decades to undo. Let us not forget those who have ended their lives due to the self hate conversion therapy encourages. These people would still be with us today if allowed a supportive place to be themselves no matter one’s gender or sexual orientation.

Conversion therapy is in direct opposition to the core code of ethics laid out by the American Psychological Association and the American Counselor Association. As licensed professionals, we agree to act with non-maleficence, to do no harm, utilize empirically supported and best care treatments, and foster client growth without an agenda of a predetermined outcome. Permitting licensed practitioners to continue to practice conversion therapy would be the board condoning acting contrary to the outlined best practices and code of ethics.

There has been a coordinated assault on vulnerable LGBTQ+ populations across the country. I have spoken to many people fearing for their safety due to legislation promoting hate under the guise of religion. As a transgender individual, I too know the fear and know how supportive counseling can save lives, mine as well. Being LGBTQ+ is not a choice or a disease, but being bigoted is. It is important for Oregon to take a stand against hate and ban conversion therapy.