

Submitter: Amber Caldera

On Behalf Of: Humans

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

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As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who provides mental health therapy in Oregon, I am in full support of HB2458. Ethical counselors know well that Conversion Therapy is a fraudulent practice with absolutely no empirical research validating its use. Best practices in counseling require providers to avoid harm to clients and an obligation to act within our ability to prevent increasing their risk for suicide. Due to religious intolerance, social/familial pressures, and systemic oppression, the LGBTQ2IA+ community experiences more negative health and mental health outcomes as well as an already increased risk for suicide. Queer folks who are subjected to conversion efforts are at an additional and extremely high risk for increased mental illness, substance abuse, and suicide. Conversion therapy is cruel and unusual punishment that does nothing other than harm people in unimaginable and irreparable ways.

Oregon can be a model of caring and life affirming action by becoming the first state in the US to completely ban this fraudulent and harmful practice. Let us not continue the barbaric and inhumane practices of subjecting vulnerable citizens to anachronistic practices of conversion and catch up to other countries who have already enacted a total ban. We all deserve to be safe, feel loved, and to be treated fairly in this country and state and this ban would help protect many people from harm and death.

Warmest regards,  
Amber Caldera, LCSW 10901