

**DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT 10/DISTRITO 10**



OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Goodwin and Nelson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Deb Patterson, State Senator from District 10 and I am writing to include my support for HB 2458 which bans the practice of conversion therapy for adults.

In 2015, the legislature passed HB 2307. This bill banned the practice of conversion therapy for minors. We are lucky to have passed HB 2307 to protect our children from this harmful “therapy” but, there was a loophole in that bill that still allowed conversion therapy for adults which HB 2458 intends to address.

I have numerous concerns with the use of conversion therapy across our country. We know that for those who have undergone conversion therapy, an individual’s risk for suicide increases by more than 8%, the likelihood of depression increases by almost 6% and the use of illegal drugs increases by 3.4% (Source: San Francisco State University). The American Psychological Association states that “...same-sex sexual and romantic attractions, feelings, and behaviors are normal and positive variations of human sexuality regardless of sexual orientation identity; [The American Psychological Association] reaffirms its position that homosexuality per se is not a mental disorder and opposes portrayals of sexual minority youths and adults as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation concludes that there is insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation.”

Colleagues, the data on conversion therapy is clear. But I want to make sure we don’t forget the individuals in this issue. Christy Mallory, Taylor Brown and Kerith Conron with the UCLA School of Law compiled a brief in 2019 that revealed that 698,000 LGBTQ adults in the US have received conversion therapy and 20,000 youth will receive this therapy before they reach adulthood in the 41 states that don’t currently ban the practice. When HB 2307 was heard in 2015, one individual who testified was named Alyssa Chiampi. Alyssa was a student at Western Oregon University, which I am now proud to represent in Senate District 10. She shared that after she moved away to college, she came out to her family and in response her mother made her agree to attend one conversion therapy appointment. She said that “I reverted back a few steps in my coming out process; I was experiencing feelings of guilt, as well as being wrong and weird for who I am... When I left the appointment, I felt as if it robbed me not only of my dignity, but it also took away my sense of self and security.”

Colleagues, I urge an aye vote on HB 2307 to close the chapter on this outdated, harmful practice.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deb Patterson".

Deb Patterson