

Submitter: Cynthia Stephan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

I am a clinical mental health therapist in Oregon and I support this bill to ban conversion therapy for adults. Conversion therapy is already banned for youth in Oregon. Conversion therapy is not an evidence-based practice and research shows that it has little benefit and can cause harm. There is evidence that people have been damaged by and even experienced trauma from conversion therapy.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) states "Conversion therapy is a discredited practice focused on changing an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. It is not an evidence-based treatment and is opposed by all major medical organizations. In fact, research continues to support that conversion therapy is harmful, especially for LGBTQ youth. In 2007, the American Psychiatric Association clarified the potential risks of conversion therapy as 'great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient.' The American Academy of Pediatrics states that 'therapy directed specifically at changing sexual orientation is contraindicated, since it can provoke guilt and anxiety while having little or no potential for achieving changes in orientation.' "

This statement can be found at this NAMI webpage on conversion therapy:
<https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities/Stopping-Harmful-Practices/Conversion-Therapy>