

Submitter: Stephanie Doig

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

I am Stephanie Doig. I am a graduate student in Portland State University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program (expected graduation June 2024). I plan to seek licensure as a professional counselor in Oregon. I am also part of the LGBTQ+ community.

I was raised in Utah in a community dominated by people who opposed any visible acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. Many LGBTQ+ people in my community have experienced "conversion therapy" both as adolescents and as adults. This supposed treatment was provided by licensed mental health practitioners with the imprimatur of both the State and the medical community. Yet, most people who experienced this supposed treatment ultimately found it wanting. At best, it was a waste of resources and basically fraudulent. At worst, it was outright harmful through increasing depression, anxiety, relational distress, and trauma.

All leading professional medical and mental health associations have rejected "conversion therapy" as a legitimate medical treatment. SOGICE (sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts) violate important ethical principles of nonmaleficence, beneficence, and veracity. It causes harm, does not promote the welfare of recipients or our community, and is effectively fraudulent (see: MICHAEL FERGUSON, ET AL., V. JONAH, ET AL.).

Passing this legislation will curtail the number of professionals from practicing SOGICE, will remove the State's de facto approval of this harmful and fraudulent treatment, and will give people who experience this treatment greater legal standing if they do experience this treatment. It is the responsibility of the State to ensure consumers of mental health care are afforded basic consumer protections from the harm and fraud of SOGICE.

I strongly urge you to support the passage of HB 2458.