

Submitter: Nickolas Hurlbut

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

I am a gay/queer cisgender man. I know from experience with the Christian church and with my experience with my parents and family members who are Christian. I was raised Christian just the same as my siblings and am the only one who is queer/gay. There is nothing about how I was raised that made me gay, I just always have been.

I was always someone who was highly involved in the Christian church, going to every event that I could. I loved feeling a part of something and I believed in the philosophy of Jesus from the written text of the Bible. I knew that I liked and was attracted to other boys growing up and in Highschool but I was scared to death of that truth. I hated myself for something I could never control. That guilt, shame, and self loathing almost led me to kill myself many times but I survived. I came out in my early 20's and finally felt some freedom. Some love and compassion for myself. I am still working through the trauma of growing up in a society that constantly told me I was evil and perverted. I push back against that narrative constantly. I am now a high school teacher and am out at work. I have many queer and straight students that I am a role model for. They see me living and thriving and realize that they can live and thrive too even in all their difference. Especially in all their difference. If I had been forced or persuaded into conversion therapy I don't believe I'd be alive today. I barely survived as it is. People will continue to die, harm themselves and others unless conversion therapy is stopped. Unless it becomes illegal to practice it, to force children into it. Please pass this bill and save our thousands of youth who already have to experience so much adversity as it is.