



February 14, 2023

To: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care

From: Oregon Psychological Association (OPA)

RE: Support of HB 2458

The Oregon Psychological Association is writing in support of HB 2458 banning conversion therapy with adults. Conversion therapy, also referred to as reparative therapy, is a harmful and discredited practice that attempts to change an individual's sexual orientation from gay, lesbian or bisexual to heterosexual and/or their gender identity from transgender/non-binary to cisgender through damaging psychological and/or spiritual means.

We were grateful to have had the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2307 in 2015. HB 2458 is intended to prohibit the practice of conversion therapy with adults. Mental health professionals have seen the devastating impact that conversion therapy can have on the well-being and mental health of those who undergo it. The methods used in conversion therapy are based on unsupported theories about sexuality and gender and have been consistently rejected by mainstream medical and mental health organizations as unethical and ineffective.

Conversion therapy can cause long-lasting psychological trauma, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and increased risk of suicide. These negative outcomes are well documented in the scientific literature, and are not outweighed by any potential benefits of the therapy.

Although adults have greater agency to choose the form of treatment with which they engage, adults are nonetheless vulnerable to seeking out conversion therapy because of pressures from family and/or faith communities which may not be accounting for the negative outcomes listed above.

It is our ethical obligation as mental health professionals to protect the well-being of our clients and to avoid practices that are harmful to their mental health. A law banning conversion therapy with adults would help to protect individuals from being subjected to this harmful practice and would align with the principles of informed consent and ethical practice in the field of psychology.

OPA strongly urges the passage of HB 2458 banning conversion therapy for adults in Oregon.

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