

Submitter: Nadine Luensman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

As a mental health professional and a person belonging to the LGBTQI+ community, I support this bill because I believe it protects citizens. It is my professional opinion that performing any type of conversion therapy, therefore aiming to force someone to behave and identify in ways outside their nature, is an added cause of problems such as chronic depression, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, isolation, and anti-social behavioral tendencies. Over half of my client base have been people within the LGBTQI+ community as well. In my work as a therapist, I have seen the traumatic effects of both formal conversation therapy and people living in unaccepting communities. These clients have either been diagnosed with PTSD or exhibit many symptoms such as low self worth, chronic intrusive thoughts and memories, sleep disturbance, and inadequate social environments. When we were asked to repress or change their sexual orientations or gender identities, they were forced to find ways to cope with the cognitive distance of living outside our natures.

Damaging coping such as substance abuse, self harm, and eating disorders are all significantly more common in LGBTQI+ youth and adults who are not given accepting and supportive environments, than in that of their straight and cis gendered peers. The very existence of conversion therapy is a continued message that we are invalidated by the state and culture in which we live.

Passing the bill would not only serve to protect many people being forced or coerced into conversion therapy, but communicate to all citizens of Oregon that this state validates human beings in the way that our elected officials claim they already do.