

Submitter: Samantha Tracy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

Oregon needs to be a model for caring and life affirming action by becoming the first state in the US to completely ban Conversion Therapy once and for all. As a mental health therapist in Oregon, I am in full support of HB2458. Ethical counselors are fully aware that Conversion Therapy is an irresponsible practice with no evidence-based research to back it up. Best practices in counseling require providers to avoid harm to clients. Period. We have an obligation and responsibility to act within our ability to prevent increasing risk for suicide, which includes putting aside personal agendas, beliefs, and bias. Due to religious beliefs, family pressures, and systemic oppression, the LGBTQIA+ community already experiences high risks for increased mental health issues, substance abuse, and suicide. This type of therapy only perpetuates a negligent practice that attempts to influence and change a person's innermost being-their gender identity, sexual identity, and sexual expression. This is morally wrong on so many levels.

As therapists, it is our ethical duty to put aside our own personal beliefs and values to provide a safe space to care for our clients in a nonjudgmental way. This bill will mirror these efforts to support and protect our clients wholeheartedly from the State level to the session room. And quite frankly, this is long overdue!

Please do the right thing for this community. Pass this bill.

Thank you.

Samantha Tracy, Professional Counselor Associate