

Submitter: Elizabeth James

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

February 15, 2023

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care,

Thank you for hearing HB 2458, I am writing in support.

As an almost 68 year old self-identified LGBTQ+ Oregonian, this bill is personal and very important to me. In my lifetime I've known many LGBTQ+ folks who were forced into behavioral health treatment, including shock treatments, in an effort to "cure" or convert them. The result? All were traumatized, many severely, and none were converted or cured. Research has also shown change efforts do not work and are harmful:

- Efforts to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity may encourage people to hide these aspects of their identity, which can lead to mental health problems such as depression, sexual problems, low self-esteem, and suicide (Beckstead and Morrow, 2004; Blosnich, et al., 2020; Dehlin, et al., 2015; Green, et al., 2020; Ryan et al., 2018).
- Experts at the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) have concluded that sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts are "coercive, can be harmful, and should not be part of behavioral health treatment" (SAMHSA, 2015).

It's also important to note all the health and behavioral health professional organizations, including the the following, that have taken positions against and on the dangers of conversion therapy: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, American College of Physicians, American Counseling Association, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychological Association, and National Association of Social Workers.

HB 2458 is needed to stop this unethical, dangerous and harmful practice.

Thank you for your consideration and please pass HB 2458.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth (Liz) James
Jacksonville, OR