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## Hearing for HB2307 Youth Mental Health Protection Act

February, 23, 2015

Alyssa Chiampi, Western Oregon University

Chair Greenlick and members of the committee,

My name is Alyssa Chiampi and I am a second year student at Western Oregon University, where I am studying Public Policy and Administration with a concentration on state and federal government, and minoring in Gender Studies. I think it is so vital that HB 2307 is passed this session.

In my family, it was nearly impossible for me to come out to my family about my sexual orientation. I was raised thinking that to be LGBTQ meant you are weird or wrong. When I moved away to college it was a lot easier to find myself and my identity, this was a very hard experience for me--I made myself choose between identity and religion. After months of being out as LGBTQ at school and to my close friends I decided to come out to my sister, who told my secret to my mother without my consent. My mom immediately brought up me participating in therapy that she believed would change my sexual orientation.

My mother made me agree to at least one conversion therapy appointment, which I did. I have never been more uncomfortable in my life than I was for the hour I spent talking to the licensed therapist about my identity. Meeting the therapist for this purpose was not what I needed then or now. I reverted back a few steps in my coming out process; I was experiencing feelings of guilt, as well as being wrong and weird for who I am. These were all feelings I had moved past and having to fall backwards was damaging to my mental health because the end goal of the therapist was to change my sexual orientation. When I left the appointment I felt as if it robbed me not only of my dignity, but it also took away my sense of self and security. I was already vulnerable and sensitive.

I feel fortunate that my mother only required me to attend one session. However, it also made me realize that other young people may not be as lucky or my situation could have been much worse. If I was capable of coming out when I was in high school and living at home I could guarantee that I would still be in conversion therapy today. I know teenagers in my hometown of Medford who battle depression and anxiety like I did. These are young people who are still closeted and who refuse to come out because their parents will take them to this unnecessary and life damaging therapy.

For this reason, I urge you to strongly support passing HB 2307 so that other LGBTQ youth do not have to experience harmful conversion therapy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I am happy to answer any of your questions.

Alyssa Chiampi  
Western Oregon University