



To: Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
From: Peter Grover, Oregon Psychological Association
Regarding: In support of HB 2307
Date: April 28, 2015

My name is Peter Grover. I am a licensed psychologist in Oregon. I am a member of the Legislative Committee of the Oregon Psychological Association and am here to represent the Oregon Psychological Association's support of the proposed legislation to prohibit licensed mental healthcare professionals from providing conversion therapy to minors.

Basic Rights Oregon approached OPA for support of this proposed legislation several months ago. The OPA Diversity Committee, Legislative Committee and Executive Board were broadly supportive of the bill. We requested feedback from our members and the overwhelming response was supportive. A concern was raised about setting a precedent for legislating what psychologists do in a therapeutic setting. We believe that this concern is important to note, but is substantially outweighed by the need to protect consumers from this risky practice that lacks empirical support.

Decades of psychological research affirm that same sex attraction is a normal variation of human sexual orientation. Homosexuality is not a mental disorder. Leading scholars studying transgender health conceptualize much of the distress experienced by transgender people through processes of minority stress, not an inherent pathology. There is also a body of literature that cites the improvement in mental health after receiving appropriate medical treatments for transition. Regarding conversion therapy, most major medical and mental health professional associations do not support the use of reparative therapies for gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals (Attachment 1).

The ethics code for psychologists is consistent with the charge of the Oregon Health Authority; we are required to provide effective, evidence-based treatments that are scientifically informed. In addition, we are required to not harm individuals with the treatments we provide (Attachment 2). The research on reparative therapies has failed to demonstrate that these methods are effective, and that they carry significant risk of harm (Attachment 3 & 4).

The Oregon Psychological Association, along with the nation's leading professional medical, health and mental health organizations, does not support efforts to change young people's sexual orientation or gender identity and has serious concerns about the potential harm from these efforts (Attachment 1).

Passing this legislation is consistent with the ethical principles for psychologists. This legislation makes a clear statement to Oregon consumers regarding the lack of scientific support and risk of harm associated with conversion therapy. By passing this legislation you are helping to protect young people who may be unable to advocate for themselves.

The Oregon Psychological Association is in full support of this bill and strongly encourages its passage.

Submitted by Peter Grover
PhD (Lic #1163) on behalf of the Oregon Psychological Association