

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me the time to speak.

My name is Manju Bangalore. I'm a University of Oregon student.

Privilege, as defined by Webster's Dictionary, is a "benefit afforded to some and not to others."

I'll share an example. If you are able to hold your partner's hand and walk down the street without fear of being harmed or punished due to your sexual orientation, you most likely have heterosexual privilege.

While the definition of privilege certainly applies in that specific case, it also applies in a larger context. For example, privilege can also be defined as the benefit afforded to some to decide what all of the others do with their lives, even though, usually, it doesn't affect them at all.

That's what conversion therapy is to me. It's dominant culture deciding for the members of the LGBT+ community who they can love and who they can be, even though it doesn't affect them at all. It's dominant culture invalidating a person if they aren't heterosexual and cisgender. It's dominant culture snatching away the innate right every single one of us has to our own individual identity.

People who testified in the House against this bill cited a few studies, claiming them to be scientifically valid. One of them was from 1969. As you can imagine, the argument and the language within it were outdated, from the wrong century.

The other citation was the Masters and Johnson team. Their study claimed that conversion therapy worked for the majority of their participant pool. They claimed that the participants were *all* gay and that many were able to lead straight lives after the therapy. However, follow-up research done by experts such as Dr. Douglas Haldeman shows that only 1 in 5 participants identified as gay. So, any conclusions that were reached through the study aren't scientifically valid because the study's basis is a lie.

And that's not just me saying it. That's the medical community saying it. The medical community has declared that none of the mentioned research has any factual basis, and yet these researchers are still cited as scientifically valid by the opposition.

Medicine has evolved since studies like these have been performed, and it's time the law follows. No sexual orientation is a disorder, and no sexual orientation should ever be treated as such. Not only is attempting to convert someone's gender identity or sexual orientation ineffective, but it is also highly dangerous to the individual. Statistics show that after conversion therapy, a person is far more at risk for suicidal ideations and mental illness. LGBT+ adolescents often times wish to identify with dominant culture to cope with the feeling of not belonging, making them vulnerable targets with conversionists.

Often times, people within dominant culture, with heterosexual or cisgender privilege, do not understand how difficult life can be when you cannot find solace within yourself. The world is a scary enough place without your surroundings constantly invalidating who you are and who you

love. Passing this bill will be a step in destroying the institutionalized prejudice unfortunately continuing on today.

I created a petition to end conversion therapy that garnered close to 450 signatures after hearing about Leelah Alcorn. It saddens me that another life had to be lost for the world to pay attention. But the petition shows that our state is one with an active, engaged community. Oregon prides itself on being progressive. It's time we prove it. It is our duty to ensure that Leelah's life does not go in vain.

She was different, not because or in spite of her identity, but because she fought for herself, tirelessly. Members of the LGBT+ community are different; in fact, many pride themselves on that fact. I'm not here to convince anyone that we are all the same. I'm here to say that you don't have to be the same to be equal. And you certainly do not have to be the same to be treated with the respect and dignity every one of us deserve.

When the opposition says that passing this bill will invade the right to privacy of a family, many of the times it's coming from a place based on the "internalized effects of a hostile family" and an even more intolerant society. Someone at some point told them something was bad and they listened and never questioned it. That's no excuse.

Yes, everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but none of us are entitled to thinking that because someone has a certain identity, they deserve to be persecuted and mistreated. None of us are entitled to being oppressive. And every single one of us is accountable for being more ethically responsible than the environment we grow up in.

Even if conversion therapy did work, even if it wasn't harmful, even if it wasn't ineffective, why would it exist? Why does it *still* exist? Why does it still continue to endanger the children of this nation? To tell them that who they are and who they love isn't okay according to some arbitrary set of rules? Because that doesn't sound like a good reason to me.

Let us not repeat history and allow this indirect murder to continue. It is your job as our leaders to do what is best for the state and to keep safe its children. Please stand on the right side of history. Support your state and its children by voting yes on House Bill 2307.

Again, thank you for allowing me the time to speak. I am more than happy to answer questions.