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On Behalf Of:

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Mental health providers have an ethical responsibility to endeavor to engage in no activity that would do harm to their clients or patients. Moreover, people come to mental health providers to gain support and healing during periods when they are psychologically vulnerable. Therefore, it is essential that mental health care providers are held to high ethical standards. Mental health providers are regarded as experts, and our practices are supported by research to ensure that there is evidence to support the efficacy and beneficence of the work that we do. Not only is conversion therapy not supported by scientific research showing that it is effective; there is research that indicates that it is harmful. A person's sexuality or gender identity is a core aspect of their identity. It is not the role of mental health providers to alter people's identities or inflict indoctrination, and doing so has been traumatic to people who have been subjected to these practices. Historically sexual minorities, were placed in asylums, and subjected to forced sterilization or lobotomies. Modern conversion "therapy," employs shame and behavioral techniques in an attempt to get people to conform to a dominant view of sexuality or gender expression. This practice may not be as invasive as historical efforts, but the motivation behind these practices remains the same: gender and sexual minorities are perceived as pathologically unhealthy, by those people who engage in conversion therapy. A view that is in opposition to both the position of the American Psychological Association and the American Counselor Association. Let the law governing mental health care in the state of Oregon reflect the ethics and values of the mental health professional organizations.

As a Professional Counselor Associate I work with gender diverse clients, many of who have internalized feelings of transphobia because of the prevalence of transphobic messages in the media. Laws across the country that target gender diverse youth, using this minority group as the target of a current moral panic has contributed to higher levels of anxiety, depression, and gender dysphoria in my clients. Oregon has an opportunity to show this population that they will protect and advocate on behalf of LGBTQ2S+ people. Passing a law that prohibits traumatic and unscientific practices is a good way of demonstrating commitment to the safety of sexual and gender minorities.