

Support of HB2458

Hello,

I am a QMHP and current graduate student working with diverse populations in Eugene, OR. I also serve on the board of the Oregon Counseling Association as the co-chair of the Graduate Programs Committee. I am writing today in support of HB2458.

In my training in graduate school, as well as in my work with clients, I have learned and experienced the importance of utilizing evidence-based practices. Conversion therapy is not an evidence-based practice, and is incredibly harmful and damaging to an individual's identity and well being. In accordance with the American Counseling Association's (ACA) Code of Ethics, mental health professionals have an ethical duty to serve clients by holding the principles of client autonomy, nonmaleficence, and beneficence as paramount.

We are strictly held to do no harm, and conversion therapy has been well documented as a harmful practice. Section A.4.b. of the ACA code specifically outlines that "Counselors are aware of—and avoid imposing—their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Counselors respect the diversity of clients, trainees, and research participants and seek training in areas in which they are at risk of imposing their values onto clients, especially when the counselor's values are inconsistent with the client's goals or are discriminatory in nature" (2014, p. 5). It is our professional honor and obligation to hold unconditional positive regard for a client's individuality and intersectional identities, and support clients towards their best possible outcomes.

Oregon is poised to serve as a leader across the country to other states with the passage of this legislation. In a state that has a despicable history of racism, homophobia, and transphobia, we currently have the opportunity to stand up and make meaningful change against the discriminatory and discredited policy of conversion therapy on a systemic level. I urge you to pass HB2458 in service of the well being of individuals in Oregon, as systemic progress on a statewide level, and as an example to other states in the nation.

Respectfully,
-Kari Stubbert

American Counseling Association. (2014). *2014 ACA Code of Ethics*.

<https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>