

Submitter: Annie Zenn
On Behalf Of: Licensed Mental Health Providers
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure: HB2458

As a Licensed Mental Health Therapist in Oregon, I am in full support of HB2458. Conversion “therapy” is not therapy, and it is not healthcare. Healthcare providers take an ethical oath of non-maleficence, to do no harm, and the trauma caused by Conversion Therapy and the denial of one’s identity is why Conversion Therapy must be outlawed in our state. Conversion Therapy allows religious extremists to target vulnerable members of the LGBTQIA+ community and use abusive tactics to shame them into self-hatred. In my work as a therapist, I have had far too many clients come to me with trauma resulting from Conversion Therapy, where the client’s friends, family members, and church communities have tried to erase their LGBTQ2IA+ identities. The shame and trauma caused from Conversion Therapy does nothing to change a person’s gender identity or sexual orientation, but it does significantly increase their risk of misusing dangerous substances and/or dying by suicide. It is time for Oregon to step up and protect the LGBTQIA+ community by outlawing this archaic and harmful practice.