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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

Hello and thank you for hearing this testimony. I am an LGBTQ person and a Licensed Professional Counselor who has worked with LGBTQ++++ individuals and families since 2003. Conversion therapy relies on ideas that attempt to convince us (LGBTQ++ people) and the world at large, that we are fundamentally flawed people based on two main ideas/theories.

First is the idea that we are aberrant, deviant, devilish, a threat to civilization, and need to be extinguished. This is the basic argument for criminalizing us, death penalty advocacy and attempts to erase us in schools and elsewhere. The second, and more recent focus by churches and conversion therapists is to identify us as morally and developmentally delayed. Something happened in our development that resulted in our immaturity. What comes from that is a focus on us being pedophiles, recruiting children, needing to utilize therapy to 'grow up' and return us to our 'natural state' of heterosexual. This is how messaging of 'love the sinner, not the sin', and 'homosexuality is just a behavior' that can be extinguished with proper therapy.

All of these ideas have been debunked. However, this messaging is rampant and traumatizing. Therapy needs to identify and heal internalized homophobia, not entrench and sanction it. Banning conversion therapy is one foundational step towards public acknowledgement that we are a normal, lovable, fully functional people, who provide countless contributions to our society. Thank you.