

Submitter: Johnny Sanders

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

My name is Johnny Sanders. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in the states of Oklahoma and Texas. "Conversion therapy" is a phrase that gets used quite often. What most people think of when they hear "conversion therapy" is forcing young gay teenagers into becoming straight. While there have been instances of aversive therapies such as "shock therapy that absolutely should be condemned, "conversion therapy" has become an umbrella term to include any type of exploration into sexuality. As it relates to transgenderism, a law such as this would prevent therapists from exploring potential root causes of gender confusion. Imagine, if a teenager has unresolved trauma and finds comfort in the transgender community. A law such of this would not allow therapists to provide exploration into how trauma could affect their gender identity. Worse, many of these clients will be pursuing a medical procedure that could potentially affect their ability to have children in the future, could cause significant physical issues and would not solve the underlying traumatic issue. We cannot put shackles on therapists to do their job to ask tough questions. Throwing umbrella terms such as "conversion therapy" may sound nice but it actually causes significantly more harm.