

Submitter: Anthony Grace

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Licensed Professional Counselor here in Oregon for the past 8 years. I have been in the mental health field for about 15 years. I am also a proud parent of two wonderful children. I am in support of protecting minors from exposure to conversion therapy. Conversion therapy seeks to change a person's sexual identity or gender identity. Identity and identity expression is at the core of American social values of liberty, justice, and freedom but it is also at the core of mental health and well-being. While parents, guardians, or other adults with authority may have a particular belief system that they may want to share with a minor under their care, these beliefs should not be forced upon them. Rather, minors should be given unconditional support for self-discovery, authentic expression, and identity formation that is free from coercion, threat, shame, guilt, manipulation, trauma, and/or abuse. I have worked with adults who were exposed to conversion therapy as minors or when they were younger. Their experiences left them traumatized, filled with guilt and self-hatred, and suicidal. I believe that supporting this bill will prevent future suicides and the perpetuation of trauma.