

Submitter: Melissa Soll

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

Please support the passage of HB 2458 to prohibit the practice of conversion therapy. As a psychologist here in OR with queer and trans/nonbinary family, friends, colleagues, and clients I vehemently oppose the archaic conversion “therapy.” As mental health professionals serving the queer and trans community, it is our ethical imperative to advocate for legislation that ensures our field does not misuse our power to traumatize and disempower the public. Conversion “therapy” uses a mixture of power and faith to inflict harm and oppress our LGBTQIA++ community with homophobic and transphobic ideology and practice. Conversion “therapy” is harmful to every client who endures this abusive “therapy.” This misuse of power by mental health “professionals” is coercive and manipulative and can cause long-lasting harm, including worsened anxiety, depression, and suicidality. Conversion “therapy” is not an evidence-based treatment and it has long been discredited. And yet, conversion mindset and homophobia/transphobia is rampant in the mental health field as it is throughout society. Without clear laws that protect the public from harm, homophobic mental health professionals will feel entitled to misuse their power to continue to confuse, misinform, disorient, coerce and traumatize clients with their oppressive beliefs to serve their own agendas.