

Submitter: Kelly Caldwell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to ask you to let this bill die in committee in favor of something more beneficial. There isn't an emergency here, rather, one is being created.

Any regulations that limit ethical practices and therapy methods and require "gender affirming" care without question, is essentially reinforcing, not prohibiting conversion therapy.

Dangerous medications and treatments are being pushed on people, creating pressure to convert and conform to gender stereotypes instead of leaving aside these limiting roles all together. Time and opportunity to explore and consider how other issues like trauma, abuse and mental health concerns are being cut short and limited by gender ideology dogma and irresponsible medical practices, and the legal and professional threats and risks practitioners could face should this bill become law.

Young homosexual and queer, persons, especially lesbians, are being pressed to identify as the opposite sex, essentially trying to make them approximate heterosexuals and gender stereotypes, instead of a method of care that supports self acceptance. This is the very definition of conversion therapy.

When you add the removal of age limitations proposed in the bill, this becomes even more unethical and convoluted. Young lesbians are being pressured to "become men". This is the most regressive, sexist and homophobic result of something that may be coming from a well intentioned place, but causes long term harms. Youth under 18 can not buy alcohol or get tattoos and should be provided chemical interference and surgery negatively impacting physical development and long term health. There is no need or reason to change the age limits and many good reasons not to. Medicalization of gender nonconformity enriches an industry that doesn't truly care for people's self actualization and happiness, instead providing false solutions for many individuals and families seeking help and support. Claims that medical gender transitions helps en mass are spurious, while the increasing number of desisters and detransitioners is being ignored. Clients facing these challenges deserve more option, not to have them limited by proposals like this bill. Of course I support the basic human rights and capacity to express oneself with authenticity safely. I'm not suggesting personal freedom or human rights be limited or curtailed in any way.

Rejecting gender roles entirely offers better options than swapping roles and stereotypes. Adults who have received proper support, and complete information about the risks and impacts of “gender affirming care” can consent to life altering changes, but those under 18 can not.

Certainly we need better support and more resources for struggling young people but this proposed bill is not the answer. The laws already on the books related to these issues do not actually present a pressing need to be changed. Put an end to this proposal that improperly attempts to criminalize therapy and counseling practices that support the well being and healthy development of whole human beings. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer identity is harmed, not helped by conflating sex and sexual orientation with current gender identity ideology. They are distinct and should remain so.

Thank you for reading and giving the topic the consideration it deserves. Please go back to the drawing board and support homosexual, bisexual and gender nonconforming youth by increasing resources and providing proper context, with the time they need for self exploration and personal growth. Don't curtail access to important counseling processes and information.

I speak as a feminist and a lesbian, as well as someone who has benefited from counseling and cares deeply for my gender nonconforming siblings.

Kelly Angelica