

Submitter: Toni Pogue

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

First, I am concerned by the inflammatory nature of this bill. It declares a state of emergency. I find it hard to believe that public peace, health and safety are at risk if this bill is not passed. Rather, I think this points to an agenda or passion project by a person/people who have an agenda that TO THEM is urgent. There is no emergency.

I also take issue with the need to ban certain therapies for adults. We trust adults to vote, serve in the military, and to raise children of their own. We also need to trust adults to be able to select physicians, therapists and other health care workers for themselves. We particularly need to trust trained mental health care providers to choose the best methods for themselves as clinicians, and for their clients. There are so many viewpoints today around the topic of gender identity and expression. Banning certain types of thinking does a disservice to all of us. Society needs therapists who will assist adults in finding the place that is right for them on the gender identity continuum. People who are questioning their gender identity or sexuality deserve safe spaces in which to talk intimately about the reasons behind their questions. Sometimes treatment may include plans for gender transition or another non-conforming gender identity. Sometimes it will not.

Increasing numbers of people are now "detransitioning" away from a trans gender identity and re-indentifying with the gender associated with their biological sex. Many of these people are deeply hurt that therapists and mental health professionals gave them only "gender affirming" therapy as described in this bill under section (B) "Conversion therapy does not mean." They wish someone had assisted them in exploring more deeply the reasons behind their desire for surgery and hormones before rubber stamping (or even encouraging) their medical and surgical body alterations.

I support people getting the best care available, the care that they need, in order to live full and happy lives. I do not believe that 100% of the time that this means supporting a gender transition. Equating a thoughtful exploration of gender identity with someone that may include tough questions with "conversion therapy" is a false equivalency that holds much potential for harm for people.

I support adults in using "gender affirming" medical technologies when that is truly what is right for them. I oppose a bill that would criminalize mental health professionals for inquiring into their patients' process around gender identity. Everyone deserves time and attention to explore the reasons for their permanently life-altering decisions, preferably before those decisions are irreversibly made. I

believe that passing this bill would potentially lead to lawsuits against the State of Oregon from detransitioning people who find out that Oregon actually prohibits mental health professionals from assisting them in questioning their motives before making permanent body modifications.

Additionally, I believe that this bill opens a path to numerous lawsuits against healthcare professionals and municipalities from people who feel they were not given the care they needed -- care that may be specifically prohibited by the state.

Please vote NO on HB 2458.