

Submitter: Kris Bifulco

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB2458

As a suicide prevention professional, I am writing to voice strong support for HB 2458, prohibiting conversion therapy, and including protections for adults from this harmful practice. Time and time again, research shows that the practice of conversion therapy actively harms the people who are subject to it, and thus, nearly all major mental health associations condemn the practice (samples of statements from mental health associations can be found in this article: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy> ).

Not only does conversion therapy perpetuate the rhetoric that aligns LGBTQ+ identity with mental illness, it causes high risk for development of mental illness and raises the risk of suicidality. Research from Trevor Project, The Williams Institute, and the Family Acceptance Project all show that LGBTQ+ youth and young adults (age 18-24, who will be protected by this bill) who are subject to conversion therapy have twice the suicide attempt rate of their peers who are not subject to it. Previous suicide attempts are among the highest risk factors for suicide deaths and the risk persists throughout the lifespan.

Conversion therapy is neither safe nor sound, and I am pleased to see the legislature take this important step in protecting all Oregonians by further prohibiting its practice. Thank you for moving this forward.