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Committee: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Measure: HB2458

Please accept this written testimony in **full support of HB2458** to prohibit the practice of conversion therapy and to declare the matter an emergency. As a public health professional and co-founder of a social enterprise whose primary work is in building suicide prevention capacity in communities, I can say that it is very well-documented that such practices are not only unhelpful as a therapeutic modality, but they are devastatingly harmful to those who are subjected.

As the mother of a nonbinary child, it weighs heavily on my mind that 45% of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and that 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth did attempt suicide (Trevor Project). Practices like conversion therapy have been documented to further increase this risk.

It is hopeful that for LGBTQ+ individuals, having an accepting and affirming home and community significantly lowers the risk of suicide. Having the ability to walk through life as their whole selves, affirmed in their authentic identity, is a truly protective factor.

In no way does the current bill prohibit professionals from exploring matters of sexuality and gender identity with clients, as many opponents claim. That is not the same as attempting to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. As a modality, conversion therapies have received strong opposition from professional associations in the fields of social work, counseling, psychology, and psychiatry, noting conflicts with their codes of ethics. **These practices must not be offered in the name of professional or clinical care, and addressing this concern is an emergency.** The lives of LGBTQ+ individuals depend on it.