



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

To: House Committee of Behavioral Health and Healthcare

From: Angela Perry

On Behalf Of: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Oregon Chapter

Date: 2/14/2023

RE: Support for HB-2458

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and Committee Members:

AFSP Oregon is in full support of HB-2458. Oregon already bans conversion therapy for youth and this bill would extend that ban to prohibit any licensed counselor from practicing on adults. AFSP stands with the research, clinical expertise, and expert consensus of every major professional health organization that conversion therapy efforts are inappropriate and harmful.

Taking steps to ban conversion therapy practices will protect LGBTQ populations and reduce suicide risk. It is vital to hold professionals and licensed mental health providers accountable by requiring them to follow professional standards and a code of ethics and prohibiting them from providing fraudulent services with no scientific basis. The practice of conversion therapy dehumanizes the LGBTQ population and tells them they have a pathology that requires medical treatment when they do not. Banning conversion therapies will ensure that vulnerable and at-risk populations are not exposed to harmful practices that increase the potential for a lifetime of mental illness and lack of self-worth.

Banning conversion therapy is effective in lowering the number of minors who are subjected to conversion therapy. The Williams Institute estimates that about 6,000 LGBTQ youth (ages 13-17) who live in states with conversion therapy bans would have received conversion therapy from a licensed health care professional by the time they turned 18 if their state did not ban the practice (Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2018).

With the ban already in place for youth, we must extend that ban to protect LGBTQ adults from this harmful and discredited practice.