

November 29, 2020

Submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights by Dr. David Chan and Dr. Jane Dobson on Bill C-6: An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy)

We are writing to you as concerned family physicians. We are troubled by the massive over reach in Bill C-6. Under the guise of stopping the practice of aversive and involuntary therapy, Bill C-6 is in fact about to criminalize parents, therapists, counsellors and pastors who seek out or provide supportive talk therapy to those with unwanted same sex attraction or gender dysphoria. Of course we are against therapy that is aversive and involuntary. What we are for is allowing people the free choice to access the help they request in order to live their life in accordance with their own beliefs. Our country supports the freedom to choose in many matters. The freedom to ask for and receive help from our pastors, counsellors and parents is essential.

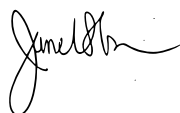
We ask that you look at this from the view point of a parent whose child is saying that they are the opposite gender. Formerly they would have been offered a range of therapies and opinions including advice to continue to see them as their natal gender and encourage them in this and to allow them to go through puberty unobstructed. This approach resulted in eighty percent of children identifying with their natal gender by adolescence⁽¹⁻²⁾. If this bill goes through only one viewpoint or therapy will be legally allowed—cross gender affirmation—which involves social transitioning, then medicalization with puberty blockers, and then a lifetime of cross sex hormones with attendant side effects, sterility, possible nonreversible surgeries and with no longterm improvement in mental health⁽³⁾. Eighty percent of our children who initially identify as opposite gender will be subjected to needless suffering which could have been avoided.

Bill C-6 will also stop the growing number of detransitioners, who regret their gender transition, from accessing the help they are calling out for. Canada should look at what is happening in England. England is being forced to reassess its approach of cross gender affirmation at its main gender centre, The Tavistock Clinic. It is currently being sued by clients who have been harmed by the very approach that Canada is seeking to promote in this bill⁽⁴⁾. Bill C-6 will take our country in this wrong direction.

Please continue to foster the freedom to choose here in Canada. Please change Bill C-6 to allow this to happen. By all means ban aversive and involuntary therapies that seek to change sexual orientation or gender identity. Do not criminalize parents for seeking proven therapies for their children. Do not criminalize supportive talk therapy for people who freely seek it out. Do not discriminate against Canadians by limiting what services they can receive based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Allow parents to continue to speak with their own children about sexuality and gender and to set rules in their own home regarding sex and relationships.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter!

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Jane Dobson, MD, CCFP

Dr. David Chan, MD, CCFP, M.Sc, FCFP

Ancaster, Ontario

References:

(1) Steensma, T. D., McGuire, J. K., Kreukels, B. P. C., Beekman, A. J., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2013). Factors

associated with desistence and persistence of childhood gender dysphoria: A quantitative follow-up study.

Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 52(6), 582-590.

(2) Thomas D. Steensma & Peggy T. Cohen-Kettenis (2018) A critical commentary on “A critical commentary on follow-up studies and “desistence” theories about transgender and gender non-conforming children”,

International Journal of Transgenderism, 19:2, 225-230

(3) Dhejne C, Lichtenstein P, Boman M, Johansson AL, Långström N, Landén M. Long-term follow-up of

transsexual persons undergoing sex reassignment surgery: cohort study in Sweden. PLoS One. 2011 Feb

22;6(2). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21364939/>

(4) <https://theguardian.com/society/2020/Oct07/courts-hear-children-cannot-consent-to-puberty-blockers>