

To the Justice Committee Reviewing Bill C6,

I am writing today to express my extreme concern with the current definition of Conversion Therapy used in the present version of Bill C6 and strongly request that you change the definition. I fully agree that “coercive and degrading practices” that are designed to change a person’s sexual identity or gender orientation should not be allowed. However, the current definition of Conversion Therapy in Bill C6 is far too broad.

Canadians need to be free to both seek and respectfully express differing opinions. I am advocating that the definition be changed to ensure that this law does not discriminate against any group of Canadians by limiting what services they can receive based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. The current wording would not allow LGBTQ2 Canadians to seek out the opinion or counsel of someone they respected who might suggest that they limit their numbers of partners. The body of medical evidence that shows that people are healthier physically and emotionally with fewer sexual partners is prolific. To keep the word “reduce” in the definition criminalizes expressing proven medical facts and common sense. Therefore, I ask that the word reduce be taken out of the definition.

An additional concern is that the current definition is too far reaching into our individual homes as Canadians. It could potentially criminalize parental conversations with their children! Parents are responsible to raise their children to be healthy responsible adults. Part of this involves speaking with their own children about sexuality and gender and to set house rules about sex and relationships. It is not unreasonable in this process to discuss limiting your sexual partners regardless of orientation!

It is also hugely important that the definition be reworded to allow free and open conversations about sexuality and sexual behaviour. The issue that I am addressing here is not any particular orientation or gender identity but rather the issue of all Canadians being free to seek input from others with a range of views. As Canadians we must remain free to express our opinions which should be done with respect. The current definition would also criminalize professional and religious counseling voluntarily requested and consented to by LGBTQ2 Canadians. This infringes on their rights!

I understand that part of the intent of this bill was to prevent LGBTQ2 Canadians from being forced into a decision that is not their own and that should remain. To do that the definition needs clarifying. The definition needs to include a phrase such as “that is not requested by the individual”. Without such a phrase it could criminalize LGBTQ2 Canadians seeking input from people they trust and respect who may share views different from their own. Here is an alternative definition of Conversion Therapy: A practice, treatment, or service, that is not requested by the individual, designed to change a person’s sexual orientation to heterosexual or gender identity to cisgender, or to repress non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour.

Respectfully,