

Dear honorable members of the house justice committee,

I am writing this brief to the committee to convey my deepest concerns about bill c 6 and its current wording. I am asking that the definition of conversion therapy be changed to reflect a more reasonable definition than the one that is currently being tabled by this government. I feel that it violates my rights and freedoms as a parent of a member of the LGBTQ community. Let me start by saying that I in no way support any practices that forcibly attempt to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

As a parent I do not think that any government should be able to compromise my ability to discuss sexuality issues and to set boundaries for acceptable sexual behaviors with any of my children. This definition is far too broad and doesn't allow for free and open conversations and places unrealistically harsh convictions on those that violate this new law.

This law could make it that in the future this would prevent people who may wish to seek voluntary professional counselling or religious counselling from leaders of the protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim faiths. The definition as it stands perpetrates even greater intolerance of religious freedoms and free speech which equates to bigotry. Voluntarily listening to anyone is not against the law and certainly isn't in and of itself harmful to anyone and free speech is vital to the survival of our democracy. Furthermore, if religious freedom is taken away then so should the ability to speak in any way that promotes any sexual orientation or gender. I am fully aware of the hurt that has been inflicted upon the LGBTQ community in the past by both the laws that were put into place by past governments and by faith communities. Much work is now needed to rebuild trust and the ability to live harmoniously together. Also, there are an increasing number of the LGBTQ community who are actively seeking life that includes being part of a faith community. Many LGBTQ members come from faith communities and have parents, friends and relatives from these faith communities and would not be supportive of bigotry and unconstitutional laws as they have themselves have experienced it in the past. Do not be misled by the powerful lobby groups as they do not speak for everyone in the LGBTQ community.

So, in closing I strongly feel that this bill c 6 is in dire need of re wording that will make it acceptable and constitutional. The current wording is unconstitutional as it limits parents' rights to speak openly and honestly about their views on sexuality and on their abilities to set healthy boundaries that protect their children from predators. Fines and jail time are detrimental to healthy families and homes. This law would violate freedom of religious thought and speech and will be detrimental to everyone's rights and freedoms as it sets a precedent for one individual or groups rights trumping another's. Wire tapping also violates freedom of speech and is unlawful without just cause and sets up the potential for misuse in court. This law will be both hard to enforce and prove in court and will lead to many civil law suits for wrongful convictions. It will also potentially be devastating and harmful to all families across the country. Families are the building blocks of a healthy democratic society. Thanks for considering what I have had to say. I strongly urge you to make the necessary changes to the wording so that all will benefit. This law is far too broad reaching in its scope and it violates two very important constitutional rights.

Sincerely yours,

Lisa Winter