

It is clearly in your mandate and in ur best interest for you to protect your citizens from emotional, societal and spiritual harm and to support their wellbeing. It is for this reason that I oppose this conversion therapy ban, specifically the way it is currently defined, and I beg you to fix the definition.

As Dr Kristopher Wells so eloquently pointed out at an Edmonton City Council meeting, there are 5 extremely important responsibilities that a municipal – or truly any level – government has: to promote the wellbeing and uphold the dignity of their residents; to protect vulnerable populations from deceptive and pseudoscientific practices; to prevent harmful and unscientific practices from occurring; to encourage people to report abuse and; to demonstrate their commitment to their values by creating a safe and inclusive community for all of its citizens.

Unfortunately, this conversion therapy ban does none of those things. In fact, it enables and excuses the opposite: it endangers the health of those who choose to self-identify in a way the mainstream LGBTQ community does not recognize. What's more, this ban would further alienate sexual minority groups and LGBTQ individuals like myself who have different world views. This legislative overreach would lead to the torture and abuse of the very people it claims to protect. Obviously this is not progressive or inclusive.

Because you do have the power and responsibility and enforcement means to protect our values, I ask, no beg, you to consider that conversion therapy, under your pseudoscientific and deceptive definition, saved my life. Is it ever wrong to save a life?

As a teenage girl growing up I had ordinary sexual feelings, thoughts and attractions. I became aroused at awkward times, wondered if I was gay, questioned whether I was really a girl, and became jittery around boys. These were all signs of healthy sexual development.

This trajectory changed abruptly when I was gang raped and became hooked on Internet porn.

If you have ever visited a porn site, you'll know the content: a highly stimulating and arousing narrative hiding an anti-woman industry that perpetuates rape culture, exploits women and is fueled by human trafficking. The gonzo porn online reinforced the misogynist nature of the trauma of the sexual assault and further victimized me by negatively affecting my sexual health and concept of self. It also created cognitive changes in me that caused me to question my sexuality and gender identity.

I did not wish to further the attractions and sexual thoughts I began to have. I could clearly see how they had escalated after the porn use and trauma, and had begun to affect my sexuality and sexual identity significantly.

I chose not to pursue the gay and bisexual feelings I had because they had become triggers, triggers I did not want or need. These sexual attractions and behaviours had negative effects on me:

- I had thoughts of having an affair despite being in a satisfying, committed and monogamous marriage.
- I became fixated on thoughts and images of male domination and gang rape like mine.
- I was exposed to pseudo-child pornography which further caused distress about who I was and why my sexuality confused and scared me.

It was at the liberal arts institution I attended that I was given the opportunity to work through these issues. I began to see a therapist at the post secondary institution I attended. There I willingly, knowingly

and gratefully received the cognitive behavioural therapy that I, as a feminist and a Christian, asked for. This same therapy, because it reduced my sexual attractions and behaviours, you have wrongly defined as conversion therapy. What I underwent was not torture. Torture is, of course, unacceptable. This therapy was healing and life giving. How then, can it be claimed that it denies my dignity?

All good intentions about this ban are misdirected and fall apart when we consider the evidence:

- Affirming gender-questioning kids does not reduce suicide rates.
- The majority of kids who self-identify as trans no longer do so by the time they finish puberty. This is good news, considering hormone treatments and gender surgeries are invasive, poorly researched and medically unnecessary.
- Detransitioners are ready to take their surgeons, gender therapists and even parents to court and to jail for refusing them access to the alternatives offered by holistic spiritual healing that would be wrongly defined as conversion therapy. Instead they face a future of uncertainty, infertility, physical damage and psychological devastation.

These results are not surprising, considering the origins of the idea that gender exists on a spectrum. This theory was the work of none other than Alfred Kinsey, the zoologist turned sex researcher who recorded live child molestation in the name of sex research. He would firmly approve of this dubious ban.

Clearly all of our honourable Members of Parliament and other invested and advising parties and all others supporting the ban are kind, compassionate persons with a fiercely loyal dedication to upholding human dignity regardless of how we self-identify. It is obvious that we have much more in common than we differ on. For my sake and for the sake of thousands of Canadians like me, I beg you not to allow my torture but to uphold my freedom to choose, to uphold my human dignity.

Thank you for your time,

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