

To the Justice Committee: Honorable Arif Virani, Honorable Mike Kelloway, Honorable James Maloney, Honorable Sameer Zueri, Honorable Ramesh Sangha and the Honorable Iqra Khalid,

I am writing you concerning the proposed Bill C-6 which amends the criminal code and bans conversion therapy. I agree with banning harmful and abusive practises used to convert a member of the LGBTQ2+ community to their natal gender, but I am concerned that the definition of conversion therapy in the proposed Bill C-6 is too broad and vague.

The definition states that, "Conversion therapy means a practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual or gender identity to cisgender, or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour." The words, "Practices, treatment or service," are too vague. Does 'practice' include parents' conversations with their own children about sexuality? Does it include friends sharing their opinions with other friends who are honestly searching and trying to make sense of their own sexual identity? Does it include pastors teaching their congregations according to the Bible? Do these words, "Practice, treatment or service," include LGBTQ2+ people who desire counselling after they have transitioned just to try to make sense of everything?

Firstly, I am concerned about how this Bill affects parental rights. As parents, we have the responsibility to guide and educate our children. We need to have the freedom to have open discussions with our children about sexuality and gender and be able to set guidelines about sex and relationships for them while they live at home. With the broad definition of conversion therapy in the proposed Bill C-6 I do not feel like I, as a parent, will be able to have open discussions about sexuality and sexual behaviour with my children without being afraid of being criminalized.

Secondly, the new Bill C-6 does not give freedom to the LGBTQ2+ people to seek counsellors or medical professionals for advice or help after they have transitioned. The proposed Bill does not respect the voluntary choices of all individuals. It actually discriminates against the LGBTQ2+ community, which are the very ones that it's trying to protect. There are people who have changed their sexual orientation that desire counselling either immediately or years later to make sense of all the changes they are going through. The wording of the conversion therapy definition scares counsellors away from wanting to meet with members of the LGBTQ2+ community for fear of being criminally charged, even if the counsellors are just trying to provide unbiased information. Whatever the counsellor is advising, if the LGBTQ2+ person has sought out their opinion, they should be allowed to hear the counsellor's advice. No law should discriminate against Canadians by limiting what services they can receive based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Please do not criminalize professional and religious counseling that has been voluntarily requested and consented to by LGBTQ2+ Canadians.

Thirdly, I am proud to be a Canadian and live in a country that guarantees freedom of speech and religious freedom for everyone. We have the freedom to make our own choices concerning our sexuality and gender. People of different faiths have different beliefs about how sexuality should be expressed, and everyone needs to be allowed to follow their own beliefs

regarding sexuality. Please protect our freedom of speech by allowing us to continue to have the ability to openly discuss sexuality with our family, friends, co-workers, pastors and counsellors.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* was established to protect all Canadians from government limitations on their private choices. There is no greater private choice that a person can make than regarding their own sexuality and gender identity. Please add a clause to the definition of conversion therapy that permits freedom for parents to openly discuss sexuality with their children, freedom for LGBTQ2+ people to access counselling, and freedom of speech on the topic. For these reasons please reconsider the definition of conversion therapy used in Bill C-6.