

November 30th, 2020

To the Justice Committee regarding Bill C-6

I would like to submit my concerns regarding Bill C-6. I have personally participated and witnessed the process of banning Conversion Therapy in my community of Spruce Grove. I also participated in the virtual process with the City of Calgary. St. Albert and Fort McMurray also experienced a concerted effort to follow Edmonton's lead in the ban on Conversion Therapy.

What I find most concerning within each jurisdiction as well as with Bill C-6 is that the definition of Conversion Therapy is too broad and does not adequately differentiate between coercive practices and one's right to choose what services, practices or treatment an individual determines. Informed valid consent was removed in all jurisdictions where it was originally proposed as it was determined the focus was to be on the prohibition of business licencing.

I agree with the following statements:

- Ban coercive, degrading practices that are designed to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Ensure that no laws discriminate against Canadians by limiting what services they can receive based on their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Include valid/informed consent;
- Allow parents to speak with their own children about sexuality and gender, and set house rules about sex and relationships;
- Allow free and open conversations about sexuality and sexual behaviour; and
- Not criminalize professional and religious counseling voluntarily requested and consented to by LGBTQ2 Canadians.

Bill C-6 and its broad definition of Conversion therapy will not protect all LGBTQ as some will desist, detransition or re-identify. From my participation in this process, I did not see this small vulnerable minority adequately represented by experts. Those who are struggling with gender dysphoria, are questioning or have experienced childhood trauma, deserve to have access to therapy that includes the appropriate therapeutic intervention of a professional.

I strongly urge this committee to change the definition of Conversion Therapy prior to a ban on harmful, coercive practices. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Darlene Masse Wurster, BSW