

Brief: Bill C-6 excludes conversion therapy practices that target trans people

Dear Members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights:

Bill C-6, “An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy)”, offers an important opportunity to reflect on conversion therapy practices that continue to adversely affect LGBTQA2S+ folks in Canada. I am very pleased to see that the federal government is committed to addressing these traumatic practices; however, I am very concerned that Bill C-6 fails to adequately define and prevent all forms of conversion therapy. I am particularly concerned about the inequitable impact the current version of the bill will have on trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse Canadians (hereafter to be referred to as “trans”).

In its current form, Bill C-6 narrowly defines conversion therapy, excluding practitioners who insist that they are not intending to “change a person’s... gender identity” but whose goal is still to discourage non-conforming gender expression and/or adoption of gender identities not assigned at birth, as . I specifically call for amendments to sections 320.101 (“definition of conversion therapy”), 320.101 (a) and (b) (“exclusions”), and 320.102 (2) (“forced conversion therapy”), in order to: include conversion therapy targeting gender expression; more clearly define conversion therapy as including practices that regard a gender identity not assigned at birth as disordered or less desirable; and assert that consent is not valid, if risks associated with conversion therapy are not clearly explained to the patient.

I urgently request that you reevaluate this bill and communicate how the federal government will address conversion therapy practices that trans Canadians experience. In addition, I ask the government to communicate other proactive strategies that will be used—beyond legislative changes to the Criminal Code—to ensure equitable access to trans-affirming information and supports for trans people of all ages (including youth), as well as their families, communities, and service and support workers, across the country.

A set of recommendations are included in the Appendix of this page:

<http://cgshe.ca/open-letter-bill-c-8-excludes-conversion-therapy-practices-that-target-trans-people/>

Thank you for your time and consideration in this very important matter.

Sincerely,
Shelby Dewhirst