

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for working on revising Bill C 6, I am sure it is not an easy assignment.

I am writing to ask you to reconsider passing Bill C 6 as it is presently written. My counselling degree thesis was on "The Healing of Damaged Emotions of Sexually Abused Children." My studies indicate that many children or young people who lean toward homosexuality have been sexually abused at some point. This bill, as it is written, clearly has the potential to inhibit assisting victims of sexual abuse to talk freely and openly about their abuse and possible subsequent attraction to the same sex. The two issues are often inseparable. Helping them to work through the pain, betrayal and myriad of other emotions which can come from the sexual abuse itself and or from discovering that their sexual preference is in contrast to their physical reality, is a necessary component of the healing process. Any person whose sexual preference contradicts their physical reality will usually, at some point, ask the question why? There are those who will want to embrace their physical orientation and will desire help to do so. Can we justifiably deny them that help and encouragement they are asking for regardless of age.

I want to clearly state that I do not support involuntary or coercive efforts to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. At the same time banning appropriate help to those seeking it will add to the risk of increasing their trauma. I am very concerned that this bill will do far more than ban inappropriate conversion therapy, it will ban appropriate therapy as well.

In addition to this concern the definition of conversion therapy in Bill C-6 is so broadly worded that it even bans efforts to reduce sexual behaviour, and I'm concerned that it could criminalize religious instruction and expression of religious beliefs around sexuality. Canadians must remain free to voluntarily seek out support to live in a way that is consistent with their beliefs, faith identity and personal convictions. Religious institutions must be able to offer support to those who seek it, as well as provide religious instruction. Please make changes to Bill C-6 so that the bill, at a minimum, clearly exempts religious instruction, parental guidance and the development of religious identity. Reducing sexual attraction or behaviour must be removed from the definition of 'conversion therapy.' Provision for appropriate counseling for those wanting to embrace their cisgender should also be included. Without these changes, I believe Bill C-6 poses a serious threat to healing from abuse, freedom of expression and the ability to live according to one's religious identity and personal convictions. "

Respectfully submitted Ron Eagles