

Parliamentary Brief

Re: Bill C-6 '*An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Conversion Therapy)*'

Submitted by Christa Lockhart

December 4, 2020

Dear Honourable Ministers of the Justice Committee,

Re: the wording of Bill C-6. -- Please read my story about my daughter and my niece who both had gender dysphoria but grew to become cisgender through non-coercive, non-abusive conversion therapy.

I want to thank you for the important role you are playing in creating good legislation to protect the LGBTQ2S+ population from discrimination and harm through abusive conversion therapy practices. This is indeed necessary. But I have a concern that Bill C-6 is based on two faulty premises: 1) that it is impossible for people with gender dysphoria or same sex attraction to willingly and successfully convert to being cisgender or heterosexual, and 2) that conversion therapy is always harmful and never helpful.

I personally know two individuals who experienced gender dysphoria and transitioned to cisgender, these being my own daughter and niece. Even one person who has willingly converted without coercion debunks the myth that it is impossible to convert (and there are many more like these two individuals). In our children's cases, the conversion therapy method used was "talk therapy" applied by myself and my sister, their parents, without coercion or causing harm, so this debunks the second myth. Here are our stories which I hope you will take the time to read as I feel they have significant bearing on how Bill C-6 should be worded.

My daughter experienced a brief time of gender confusion before she was even three years old, when she thought she was a boy. I only found out about it later when my daughter said to me one day, "*Mom, back when I was boy... wait a minute, was I ever a boy?*" I think my daughter's gender confusion at that early age was due to the fact that I had not yet affirmed her biological sex, until finally at the age of 2 ½, when I put a dress on her and proclaimed, "*What a pretty girl you are!*"-- that was the turn-around for her. At that moment, I could see on her face that she realised she was a girl, and she never questioned her gender again. That little, timely, non-abusive affirmation was pivotal in helping my daughter match her gender identity with her biology, and it protected her from years of confusion and potential unnecessary transition. I shudder to think what the outcome would have been if I had neglected my parental duty to affirm my daughter's biological gender at that early age, or if, when she asked me, "*Was I ever a boy?*", I would have felt pressure from a government legislation to "affirm" her confusion and say something like, "*If you thought you were a boy, then, yes, you were a boy*". But fortunately, there was no legislation then and I was free to say, "*Dear, you have always been a girl*", thus giving her the priceless gift of knowing who she really was. Because of this carefully considerate "talk therapy", my daughter was spared the distress of ever questioning her gender. Now she is married to a wonderful man and looking forward to the birth of their first child—

something which would not have been possible if I had felt obligated to affirm her confusion, and help her down the path of transitioning to the opposite sex through hormone blockers and invasive sex change surgery leading to sterilisation.

My sister's story is even more poignant in showing how a child's early sense of gender is greatly influenced by the positive affirmation or negative feedback they receive. Here is her testimony:

*My daughter was born into a broken home where her early years were marked with much strife and the absence of her father. Also, her brother resented that she was not a boy and communicated this to her abusively.*

*As soon as my daughter began talking, she spoke of herself as a boy and showed an aversion to feminine things. I questioned if rejection could be at the root of her gender confusion. To support her, I loved her where she was at and respected her likes and dislikes. But I did not give way to my toddler's immature sense of identity. I gently affirmed her girlhood and gave her the time she needed to continue developing. As time passed, I witnessed a gradual change in her. She began identifying as a girl and started liking the "girly" things she had rejected in the past. Then one day, after a fight with her brother, she said to me, "I wish I was a boy because then my brother would be nice to me!" What insight this gave me into the rejection she was feeling as a girl and her solution to remedy it! Her real need was not to transition to become a boy, but to feel loved and accepted as the girl she was. And once we addressed this need through love and affirmation of her gender based on her biological sex (even by her brother), her gender confusion completely resolved. Today, at age six, she sees herself as a girl and is happy to be one.*

*Having journeyed alongside my daughter in this, I shudder to think of the potentially disastrous consequences if, at the onset of her confusion, I was forced by law to not affirm her biological sex but defer to her immature understanding of herself and prematurely guide her in a process to becoming the person she felt it was better to be at the time. This process would have exposed her to further trauma, harming her emotions, sense of identity, confidence and interaction with others, not to mention if she would continue on to transition, the physical suffering of future hormone therapy, multiple surgeries leading to sterilisation, and being deprived of ever giving birth to a child with her life partner. This outcome would have been an outright abuse of my child due to a supreme neglect of duty on my part and that of a government whose mandate is to protect our vulnerable children.*

Statistics show that most gender confused children, granted good and appropriate support, will accept their biology by the age of 18, while Twitter is filled with hundreds of transgenders lamenting that they were led to transition at such an early age where they could not understand the long-term consequences. In all fairness, we ask you to please create legislation that will allow these young people the *option* to align their perception of their gender with their physical bodies and receive the appropriate counsel and support to do so. In the attempt to rule out abusive practices, *please do not* criminalise the parents, therapists, pastors, imams, rabbis, or anyone else who has the capacity to help those who are needing a different kind of "gender affirmation" and support.

Thank you for hearing our stories and this appeal,

Christa Lockhart