

Parliamentary Brief
RE: Bill C-6 (conversion therapy)
Submitted by Kevin Watson

I would like to first state that I support the bill in its current form and believe that all amendments to the criminal code in this bill are justified and work to protect Canada's LGBTQ2+ youth.

In contrast to the words of many other people writing in on this issue, I do believe that gender identity needs to be protected from the dangers of conversion therapy. Just like sexual orientation, gender identity is, as the name implies, part of a person's identity and who they are. Conversion “therapy” is in no way a justified practice as the idea that you are able to change someone's gender or sexual identity has no scientific evidence to back up this claim, rather the idea of its effectiveness comes from the results of terrorizing individuals into believing that there is something wrong with who they are, causing life-long psychological issues.¹

Despite the claims from other people involved in this issue, respecting and affirming transgender people, especially children, gender identity does not damage their mental well being, in fact it is quite to the contrary. The opposition of gender-affirming care and treatment is in itself a kind of conversion therapy, as those who practice it are under the belief that a person's gender non-conformity is a pathological disorder and that by not respecting or understanding it, it is able to be cured.²

As a Canadian LGBT youth who has heard of the horrors of conversion therapy and the damaging effect it has on individuals across the LGBTQ2+ spectrum, I believe it is unjustified to continue to allow this practice. While I live in a very liberal area in Canada, there are those who live in far more conservative areas that may be being put into this kind of “therapy” by their family.

You cannot change people's gender or sexual identities. No amount of “therapy”, bullying, gaslighting, parental pressure or any other tactic can force children to be someone they are not. If a child identifies one way it should be respected until the child, on their own volition, comes to the conclusion that they no longer identify that way.

Kevin Watson

Citations:

¹Robert J. Cramer, Frank D. Golom, Charles T. LoPresto & Shalene M. Kirkley (2008) Weighing the Evidence: Empirical Assessment and Ethical Implications of Conversion Therapy, *Ethics & Behavior*, 18:1, 93-114, DOI: [10.1080/10508420701713014](https://doi.org/10.1080/10508420701713014)

²Florence Ashley (2020) Homophobia, conversion therapy, and care models for trans youth: defending the gender-affirmative approach, *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 17:4, 361-383, DOI: [10.1080/19361653.2019.1665610](https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2019.1665610)