

December 4th, 2020

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

I am writing to you to voice Planned Parenthood Toronto's support of Bill C-6, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy)*. Conversion therapy is a harmful practice rooted in homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia which tries to change 2SLGBTQ individuals into something they are not, and it is particularly damaging for youth.

As an organization that exclusively works with youth, including many 2SLGBTQ youth, we have seen first-hand the difference that a supportive, open environment to explore issues related gender identity and sexual orientation can make. We see it in the youth who access our services, the youth who reach out to us for resources and tools, and the youth who join our programs in search of a sense of community and a safe space in which to be themselves.

We also see the damage that can be caused when 2SLGBTQ youth are not given the support they deserve to openly and safely talk about these parts of themselves and be affirmed in their identities. Everyone deserves compassion, care, and understanding, no matter where they are at in their journey regarding their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Given the nature of our work and clientele, we would be remiss to remain silent on a bill that would take the important step of criminalizing aspects of a dangerous practice that perpetuates misconceptions about sexual orientation and gender identity. Specifically, conversion therapy promotes the troubling idea that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity can be changed by an external party, medical professional or otherwise.

Which is why, in addition to voicing our support for 2SLGBTQ youth, we unequivocally and enthusiastically support Bill C-6 and its related objectives.

We believe the authors of this bill have done their due diligence in assessing the scientific evidence at hand and understanding the demonstrated harm that conversion therapy does to individuals, as well as acknowledging that this practice is inherently violent towards 2SLGBTQ people and denies our human dignity and equality. It is necessary to prohibit these practices knowing the pain and damage that they cause, particularly to 2SLGBTQ children and youth.

We support people of all ages, especially youth, in their own self-identification and believe that they should be given the resources and tools necessary to explore and affirm their sexual and gender identities.

Yours in choice,



Cheryl Dobinson
Interim Executive Director,
Planned Parenthood Toronto

choice is yours.