

Testimony Bill C-6: Conversion Therapy

I'm George Spencer and I appreciate this opportunity to share my personal testimony regarding Bill C-6.

From when I could remember I was different from the other boys. They teased me and called me a girl and many other slurs that need not to be repeated. Everyday at school was hell to me right through until grade 9 when I quit school due to the bullying.

At 16 I went into the work force at a mining camp where the teasing continued. I had some support and protection from my brothers.

I was an introverted frightened young man; and started to think I was a girl trapped in a male body, because that was all I heard from society.

I was acknowledged as a hard worker but nobody ever confirmed my masculinity.

I could never express my inside feelings. There was no one to talk to since it was taboo to talk about sexuality in the mid 1960's. I kept on suppressing my emotions.

At 22 I moved out to BC and started working in a mill at a mine.

There I got into drugs and alcohol with the guys. At 27 I lost my job due to addictions and moved to Vancouver. The new environment just complicated my innermost turmoil.

I sought out psychiatric help and found a young doctor, who after several appointments encouraged me to start cross dressing and search out a gay lifestyle. The doctor hooked me up with a gay guy and that's where my decades of life in the LGBTQ communities started.

I became an icon in the gay community and fully supported it. My work was in gay bars and on the outside it seems I was happy and successful.

It was exciting, people liked me and I loved people; but deep down my emotions and feelings were being more and more defiled. It left me with a huge emptiness inside, that I tried to fill with partying, sex, drugs and alcohol. I lost self-respect, had to suppress more and more emotions.

My sexual lifestyle was totally out of control.

I had no concerns about my own well being or anybody else's.

I went in and out of every rehab/addictions center/program that I could find and they made no permanent improvement to my lifestyle.

Suicide was the most prevalent thought in my mind.

Finally, after 28 years of torment I called on God for help, that I could not do this on my own.

During the next week I got my mind and belongings together to leave Vancouver. I didn't want to continue with a gay lifestyle.

I felt called to Keremeos and got a phone number off a church door.

After detoxing in a remote campsite for a month, with the thoughts and desires to meet with the God who brought me out of Vancouver; I went back

to the church door with a condition for God: If they allow me and my dog in, I will stay. They did!

My pastor was very helpful and didn't condemn me or my old lifestyle. He did not tell me what I had to do, but rather helped me to get where I wanted to go. He helped me to make decisions that were not destructive, but beneficial to my life, and the people around me. I still needed a lot of help to get my mind and understanding fixed for the new lifestyle.

I also met with a pastor with a healing ministry that did miracles to my thoughts and understanding, even go back to the original root of my problems. It helped me with the freedom and choice I have now. I needed to make better choices than what was recommended 30 years earlier by the psychiatrist. It applies to my whole life. I really needed that support.

Now 11 years after my conversion I'm still walking with God, with absolutely no desire to return to the old lifestyle. All addictions are gone. I am active in charity work with a soup kitchen among other services and was awarded the Local Volunteer grant by First West Credit Union in 2017.

I just wish, as a 6-year old, there was a way to confirm any gender identity crisis and ways to develop proper understanding. It would have saved me all this unnecessary decades of confusion and self-destruction.

Please ensure that the government support and allow people like me to receive this wonderful support. We need it. I am not alone. Do not allow Bill C-6 to restrict our freedom.

Thank you.