

The Hon. David Lametti and the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights  
284 Wellington Street  
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Dear Minister Lametti and the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

## **A Proposed Amendment to Bill C-6**

We appreciate that the government is seeking to ban coercive and degrading practices that are designed to change a person's sexual orientation or gender. The often cited example for establishing such a law was the use of shock therapy for treating sexual disorders. Back in the 1960's it was used to treat people with a variety of psychological disorders (and still is for some disorders other than sexual dysphoria). It was shown to be harmful and therefore has been abandoned. Since we have learned that aversion therapies of this type are harmful, is there a need for such a generalized and draconian law that will end up filtering out all helpful counsel and therapies for those who would like assistance working out their sexual orientation and gender?

By defining conversion therapy as, *"a practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual or gender identity to cisgender, or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour,"* it assumes that determining one's sexual orientation or gender is a straight forward process and is fixed, and not arrived at by a complex set of experiences, values, biological tendencies, relationships, and counsel. The proposed bill as written, while intending to help and protect individuals from abuse, will in fact do more harm than good in what it will criminalize.

For example, since the majority of individuals who explore gender change end up returning to their biological gender\*, the law should not forbid an honest, open and non-coercive discussion of such matters and also should not make unlawful the practice of offering help to such individuals in sorting out their sexual identity. Common sense would recommend that overriding one's biological gender is not something one does without seriously considering the outcomes and options for such a life-altering decision. This is especially so when it comes to the fluid, impressionable and vulnerable emotional and sexual condition of young people. They need the expertise of parents, religious leaders and trained professionals to guide them through such a decision. With the present definition, it could be perceived that a parent is acting criminally to influence the "sexual behaviour" of their child.

The wording of the present law may prevent some cruel and repressive practices, but at the same time cause even greater cruel and repressive practices, such as encouraging youth to have irreversible sex changes that they may later want to undo. This law even prohibits any support for a child seeking to de-transition back to their birth gender. History is reproving us for the shock therapy treatments administered 60 years ago. If we do not change the wording of this bill, history will reprove and haunt us for neglecting our responsibility to offer the best research, counsel and therapies available to help individuals who deal with gender confusion.

Therefore, I recommend that the wording of Bill C-6 should define conversion therapy as:

***“a practice that seeks to force a person, against their will, to adopt a sexual orientation or gender that they have not accepted, and withholds from them the opportunity to explore the outcomes, options, values and therapies of not accepting their biological makeup”.***

Both the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association recognize that gender identity fluctuates, and the vast majority of gender dysphoric minors will eventually accept their biological sex. (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-Fifth Edition, p. 455.)

For list of citations supporting this finding please refer to the ARPA Policy Report on Conversion Therapy, Fall Edition 2019. <https://arpacanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ARPA-PolicyReport-ConvTherapy-CIT-PR-hyperlinked.pdf>

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