

To the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights,

This letter contains concerns and suggestions written by a fellow citizen but contains ones that I fully affirm. As someone who has a family member that has similar struggles, Bill C-6 has a direct and personal impact on my life and those closest to me. All Canadians have the right to seek and receive counsel, and I believe that the current definition of Conversion Therapy is too broad and wrongly criminalizes services freely sought out by members of the LGBTQ2 community.

Therefore, I ask you to amend the bill's current definition and uphold the rights and freedoms of LGBTQ2 Canadians. The following excerpt from the aforementioned letter follows below and has my full endorsement:

In past history, conversion therapy has included things like electric-shock “therapy,” heterosexual pornography, forced confinement, etc. Such practices have been discredited by experts, and are obviously contrary to the value and dignity of the human person. However, the current definition would inhibit the freedom of any non-heterosexual person from freely seeking ideas, advice or a challenge to their behaviors.

Here is an example of how this would limit and infringe on the freedom of a person. For instance, a lesbian woman who wanted to know and engage with a mentor from the Hindu/Muslim/Christian/Catholic community regarding their beliefs of homosexuality wouldn't be able to hold an honest conversation since the Hindu/Muslim/Christian/Catholic person would be in fear of violating such a law since any verbal contradiction or challenge to the lesbian woman's lifestyle choices could be considered as an attempt 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." (This is the current definition in C-6.) This would be a huge limitation on the freedom of this woman since it is her desire to know and hear and consider and discuss what value she wanted to place upon these beliefs and ideas that are held by the other person or persons. Such an example is not far-fetched or imaginary nor is it limited to the aforementioned example. Please consider Emmanuel's story which he has freely vocalized so that other people might have the same opportunity and freedoms he has enjoyed in seeking support and advice (<https://fixthedefinition.ca/>).

Bill C-6 currently defines 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.”

"This definition is far too broad and too vague. If passed unamended, advice or counsel promoting the reduction of sexual behaviour could be criminal. Any support for transgendered people seeking to de-transition back to their birth gender would be considered conversion therapy. "-- Garnett Genius

Please fix the definition to allow people to freely choose counseling and support from different perspectives, to have conversations with parents or mentors, and hold casual conversations with friends and others. I suggest the following amendments to Bill C-6.

- Ban coercive, degrading practices that are designed to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. This would be the above mentioned historical practices which I have previously underlined.
- Ensure that no laws discriminate against Canadians by limiting what services they can receive based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Allow free and open conversations about sexuality and sexual behaviour, and do not criminalize professional, familial, and religious counseling voluntarily requested and consented to by LGBTQ2 Canadians.

Thank you for your service to the Canadian people.

Sincerely,

Maggie Chan