

Bill C-6 Ban on Conversion Therapy in Canada

Sunday, December 6, 2020

Dear House of Commons:

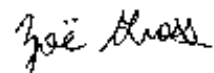
I am writing to express my ardent support for Bill C-6: An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), for a complete ban on practicing, advertising, and profiting from conversion therapy in this country. I recently completed my doctorate in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto, and as such I have spent over a decade learning and teaching about issues of sex, gender, and sexuality through a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives.

Conversion therapy is an incredibly harmful practice and has served to disavow and enact institutional violence against queer, non-binary, and transgender children, youth, and adults. Those who survive these attempts to deny and change who they are, including how they wish to identify and how that is expressed. The harmful nature of conversion therapy is well-documented and survivors themselves have consistently spoken out against the practice based on their own experiences of being coerced or forced to participate, with the threat that they will be disowned by their families if they refuse. Unfortunately our homes and our families, and those who are sought out to provide advice, care, and support, are not always safe places for us to find the support we need to be who we are. As a queer person myself, and survivor of childhood abuse, healing and growth has happened most when I am surrounded by those who openly accept and advocate for me to be able to exist and thrive in all aspects of my life.

This is not an issue that can be left to the private decisions of individuals, families, and religious institutions; it must be affirmed as an essential public concern for quality of life and upholding the rights of queer, non-binary, and transgender persons. In addition to banning conversion therapy altogether, queer, non-binary, and transgender individuals, families, and communities are in need of further governmental and community support and resources. The real problem is not queer, non-binary, and trans people. The systemic homophobia and transphobia in Canada positions these important family and community members as if they are not even human, or that they do not have a right to exist. This is an issue that must be stopped with our generation, one step in the important work of equality and justice.

I appreciate your time and attention and implore you to pass Bill C-6 without delay.

Respectfully,



Zoë Gross, PhD