

Sunday, December 6, 2020

RE: Bill C-6 Ban on Conversion Therapy in Canada

Dear House of Commons:

I am writing you in support of Bill C-6: An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy). I am a PhD Candidate in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies and an educator in the fields of Women and Gender Studies, Sexuality Studies, and Transgender Studies.

It is well-documented that conversion therapy is unscientific and based in outdated understandings of gender identity and sexual orientation as something that can be changed through behaviour, prayer, or indoctrination. In fact, conversion therapy is not only entirely ineffective in changing a person's gender identity and/or sexual orientation, it is also incredibly damaging to a person's mental wellbeing and sense of self.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees all Canadians the same rights and freedoms. This should include the right and freedom to express one's gender identity and sexual orientation without interference or coercion from others. Conversion therapy is an attack on LGBTQ+ Canadians' rights that cisgender and heterosexual Canadians have by virtue of belonging to the status quo.

It must also be noted that banning conversion therapy does not, in any way, restrict or limit others' freedom of religion or freedom of speech. Such an argument is based in fear mongering and the privileging of one right over another. To claim that it is one's religious right to discriminate against LGBTQ+ Canadians fails to consider the difference between the right for someone to harbour religious beliefs and the right to *enact those beliefs onto others through discriminatory and oppressive measures*. Such a right cannot be said to exist. Moreover, to enact those beliefs onto others is to deny the harmed party their right to self-determination.

I strongly urge the House to pass Bill C-6, as it is an important step toward protecting LGBTQ+ Canadians.

Sincerely,



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