



About Fierté Canada Pride

Fierté Canada Pride (FCP) is the national association of Canadian Pride organizations, representing over 75 organizations across our country who celebrate the incredible diversity of 2SLGBTQIA+¹ people. FCP's membership includes a wide range of organizations that share diverse viewpoints about issues impacting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Bill C-6

As of this writing, over 30 briefs have been submitted to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights regarding Canadian peoples' perspectives on the Bill before you. Many of the briefs that urge this committee to make changes to this Bill include inaccurate interpretations of the proposed legislation, and we hope to express our support for this legislation as it stands.

We hope to offer some responses to the many concerns raised by Canadians across our country: responses that are informed by our members' shared experiences and expertise as they celebrate 2SLGBTQIA+ realities every year.

Firstly, it is necessary that Bill C-6 includes references to “gender identity”. While many Canadians may believe that gender and sex are intrinsically connected, or that a person's gender is fundamentally tied to their sex, the [World Health Organization](#) defines gender as “the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as the norms, roles and relationships that exist between them. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time. It is also important to recognize identities that do not fit into the binary male or female sex categories.”²

What this tells us is that a person's gender identity is socially constructed through a shared understanding of what “man” and “woman” (or other genders) means in any given culture. As an association that represents diverse member organizations, we know that there are so many cultures across our country that have different social constructions of gender than others. Most notably, our country includes hundreds of Indigenous cultures that have a strong history and understanding of gender that falls outside of Western comprehensions of gender identity. Today, Canadian society comprehends those whose

¹ While the Government of Canada uses the acronym LGBTQ2, FCP uses the 2SLGBTQIA+ acronym to actively include the experiences of Intersex and asexual people, and to ensure a centering of Two Spirit and Indigiqueer perspectives.

² World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/news/factsheet-403/en/>

gender identity falls outside of a male = man, female = woman binary as transgender or non-binary.

The harms of forced conversion therapy include pain caused to trans and non-binary Canadians, and we must not leave these people behind. A [2019 study by TransPulse Canada](#) found that over 10% of trans and non-binary people in our country have undergone conversion therapy in their lifetimes³. The choice to remove the words “gender identity” from this Bill would be an insult to the over 10% of trans and non-binary people in our country who have experienced this violence.

Secondly, the assertion that Bill C-6 will limit the ability for 2SLGBTQIA+ people to seek out counselling or religious support to help them understand their identities is false. As written, Bill C-6 (in section 5 that makes reference to a proposed section 320.101 of the Criminal Code) clearly identifies that “th[e] definition [of conversion therapy] does not include a practice, treatment or service that relates [...] to a person’s exploration of their identity or to its development.”

As we have explained, our association represents hundreds of member organizations, including religiously affiliated Prides that understand the value and importance of religion and religious support for all people, including 2SLGBTQIA+ people. This is evidenced by the hundreds of churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious settings across our country who provide religious ceremonies during Pride season each year. 2SLGBTQIA+ people, just like any other group of people, have the right to seek religious counsel to help them in their exploration of their identity, and this Bill clearly reaffirms this right.

What this Bill does not affirm, is the legitimacy of any professional, religious or otherwise, to blur the boundaries between providing a service that “relates [...] to a person’s exploration of their identity” and a “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”. As we can see from the dozens of briefs filed by religious organizations across our country, religious organizations are wanting to be assured that their ability to provide counsel to 2SLGBTQIA+ people wanting to explore their identity remains intact. As written, this Bill clearly protects that right, and the idea that it doesn’t is a misunderstanding of this legislation.

³ TransPulse Canada Survey, QuickStat #1,
<https://transpulsecanada.ca/results/quickstat-1-conversion-therapy/>



Finally, Bill C-6 will protect 2SLGBTQIA+ adults and children from experiencing forced conversion practices, which continue to cause immense harm to 2SLGBTQIA+ people and their loved ones across the world. As an association that represents over 75 Pride organizations, we have heard thousands of 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples' stories. These stories have included experiences of conversion therapy, and without the passing of Bill C-6, we fear that we will continue to hear these terrifying stories of violence and harm.

2SLGBTQIA+ identity, including trans and non-binary identities, cannot be changed by force. While we know, from the range of experiences of our community, that identity is fluid, we also know that this fluidity is not defined by outside, forced, external pressures, but by the beautiful and complex diversity of our humanness. By banning forced conversion therapy at a national level, Canada will be ensuring that 2SLGBTQIA+ people can live their lives as their authentic selves, and that if their identities change, it will not be because of forced violent practices, but of their own willing self-exploration.

We urge our Government to support Bill C-6, and ensure that no 2SLGBTQIA+ person ever experiences these abhorrent practices ever again.

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