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Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Attention: Marc-Olivier Girard, Clerk of the Committee

**Re: Bill C-6, Submission on An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy)
on behalf of the Youth Project**

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Youth Project as our submission on Bill C-6. The Youth Project's mission is to make Nova Scotia a safer, healthier, and happier place for Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth through support, education, resource expansion and community development. The Youth Project has been proudly providing resources to the 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/ Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, +) community for 27 years, since 1993.

It is the Youth Project's position that the amended changes of the definition of conversion therapy (320.101) to include a "person's gender transition" and "a person's exploration of their identity or to its development" is a crucial addition. Conversion therapy is an abusive, traumatizing and coercive practice rooted in an attempt to repathologize 2SLGBTQIA+ identities¹. The Pan American Health Organization, a regional office of the World Health Organization, concluded that conversion therapy, "lack[s] medical justification and represent[s] a serious threat to the health and well-being of affected people"².

¹ American Psychological Association, Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation. (2009). *Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbcp/publications/therapeutic-resp.html>

² PAHO/WHO. (2009). *"Cures" for an Illness that does not Exist*. Retrieved from <https://www.paho.org/en/documents/cures-illness-does-not-exist-2009>



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In 2019 The House of Commons released a Report of the Standing Committee on Health titled *The Health of LGBTQIA2 Communities in Canada*³ and in its report, the Committee notes “that a number of factors contribute to the health inequities experienced by LGBTQIA2 communities, including discrimination and stigmatization” and recommends that “the Government of Canada, as part of its efforts to modernize its sex and gender information practices, consult with trans and non-binary individuals to establish best practices” and that “the Government of Canada work with the provinces and territories to eliminate the practice of conversion therapy in Canada and consider making further modifications to the *Criminal Code*”. It is critical that the pre-existing mentioned discrimination and stigmatization of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities do not act as influences in the creation of national policy.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission states that “70% of trans youth in Canada have experienced discrimination because of gender identity” and Chief Commissioner Landry strongly states to “...work together, so that all Canadians, including all trans and gender-diverse persons, see themselves in their human rights laws”⁴. Two Spirit, transgender, and gender diverse youth are a vulnerable population and it is important that there is legislation to ensure basic levels of safety, understanding, care.

In line with this information, previously designed recommendations, and clarifying statistics, the Youth Project also strongly believes that Bill-C6 should clearly state that consent cannot be given to participate in conversion therapy. Due to the coercive nature, inherent power differentials, and targeting of vulnerable populations of conversion therapy practices, it is extremely dangerous to negate the influential results of those pressures. 2SLGBTQIA+ youth may have been exposed to fearful, medically/scientifically incorrect information, and hateful attitudes and as a result might feel pressured to consent⁵. It is also essential that conversion therapy is categorized as extremely damaging for every age and allows protection for 2SLGBTQIA+ community members over the age of 18.

³ Report of the Standing Committee on Health. (2019). *The Health of LGBTQIA2 Communities in Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/HESA/Reports/RP10574595/hesarp28/hesarp28-e.pdf>

⁴ Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2016). *LGBTQ21 Rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/lgbtq2i-rights>

⁵ Michael Tutton. (2018). *Nova Scotia's Liberal Government to Ban Conversion Therapy for LGBTQ Youth*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/4440783/conversion-therapy-ban/>



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The Youth Project is a multiservice, provincial non-profit with the aim to further the inclusion and wellness of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth under the age of 25 and provide social, health, and cultural programs, services, celebrations for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and their communities. The Youth Project is an organization that centres the perspectives, experiences, and opinions of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth who should be the primary perspective and position represented through the course of national decision-making pertaining to Bill C-6.