



Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Supporting HB 6695, An Act Concerning the Protection of Youth from Conversion Therapy

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is David McGuire, and I am the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am here to testify in support of HB 6695, which would protect LGBT youth in our state from the dangerous, harmful effects of conversion “therapy,” also known as “reparative therapy,” in our state.

Conversion therapy is a dangerous and discredited practice that seeks to change an individual’s sexual orientation, to change behaviors or gender expressions, and/or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attraction or feelings toward individuals of the same sex. National and statewide leaders in medicine, mental healthcare, and human services have rejected it.

As an organization committed to equality, liberty, and freedom for all people, the ACLU of Connecticut strongly supports government policies that prevent discrimination and protect LGBT rights. The government should not be in the business of providing licenses to discriminate against entire groups of people because of who they are or who they love. Yet current state law would allow a psychologist who offered harmful conversion therapy to vulnerable LGBT youth to seek and receive professional licensure in Connecticut. This type of state-sanctioned discrimination has no place in our state, and it should be abolished.

By allowing Connecticut’s Department of Public Health to discipline licensed health professionals that engage in conversion therapy and by permitting someone who is subjected to conversion therapy to seek a consumer fraud claim to recover damages, this bill would send a clear message that Connecticut does not condone conversion therapy. In addition to protecting youth, it would enable well-intentioned parents to better determine whether someone offering counseling for LGBT youth was engaging in potentially harmful practices.

LGBT youth need and deserve safety, support, and acceptance, not state-sanctioned shame and harm. The government should not be in the practice of condoning conversion therapy, a discriminatory practice that can permanently hurt vulnerable LGBT children. By ensuring that Connecticut youth are protected from conversion therapy, now and in the future, HB 6695 is the next logical step for Connecticut to continue leading the way in protecting LGBT rights.

We encourage you to support H.B. 6695.