



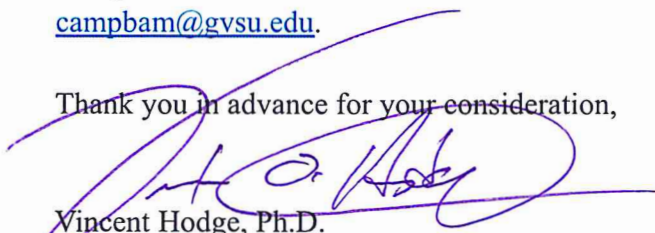
June 5, 2023

Dear Representatives Brabec and Rogers,

The Michigan Association of School Psychologists (MASP) endorses full support for HB 4616 and HB 4617, which ban conversion therapy for individuals under the age of eighteen. Conversion therapy is a harmful practice that has been renounced by all major medical and mental health organizations, including the American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and American Psychological Association. Twenty one states and seventy municipalities have banned the practice of conversion therapy by licensed health care professionals. Empirical and anecdotal research does not provide support for conversion therapy and outlines that it is a dangerous practice that increases the likelihood of suicide among LGBTQ+ youth when compared to those who have not received the harmful treatment. Further, individuals who are given conversion therapy also have higher rates of depression, homelessness, and drug use.

Conversion therapy, which has been utilized on 5% of Michigan LGBTQ+ youth, is a discredited practice that attempts to change the sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender identity of individuals who identify as LGBTQ+. The American Psychological Association and other mental health organizations have outlined that identifying as LGBTQ+ is not a mental health disorder. Therefore, an attempt to change one's sexual identity is harmful and unethical. A peer-reviewed study by The Trevor Project's researchers, published in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 2020, found that LGBTQ youth who underwent conversion therapy were more than twice as likely to report having attempted suicide and more than 2.5 times as likely to report multiple suicide attempts in the past year. Further, a peer reviewed study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics* in 2022, noted that 9.23 billion dollars is spent each year in the United States on the practice of conversion therapy and the reparative measures needed to address the harm associated with the practice. Conversion therapy is a costly practice that is harmful to LGBTQ+ youth. A ban on conversion therapy will ensure that safe and effective therapy is provided for LGBTQ+ youth in Michigan. You have a chance to make a difference in the lives of LGBTQ+ youth and stand on the right side of history by banning conversion therapy in the state of Michigan. For further information, please contact Dr. Vincent Hodge, MASP President and Multicultural Committee Chair at vhodge@sjcisd.org and Dr. Amy Campbell, MASP President-Elect and Legislative Action Committee Chair at campbam@gvsu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,



Vincent Hodge, Ph.D.

MASP President and Multicultural Committee Chair