



Michigan House of Representatives
House Health Policy Committee
Behavioral Health Subcommittee
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

June 6, 2023

Re: Testimony from the Human Rights Campaign in support of passing HB 4616 and HB 4617 to ban conversion therapy practices in Michigan.

Dear Chair Rogers and Members of the Committee:

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), on behalf of its more than three million members and supporters nationwide, thanks you for the opportunity to testify in support of passing HB 4616 and HB 4617 which bans the dangerous and discredited practice of so-called “conversion therapy.” We strongly urge you to support passage of this ban on conversion therapy.

HRC is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) equality. By inspiring and engaging all Americans, HRC strives to end discrimination against LGBTQ people and realize a world that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all.

So-called “conversion therapy,” sometimes called “sexual orientation change efforts” or “reparative therapy,” encompasses a range of dangerous and discredited practices that falsely claim to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. These practices are based on the false premise that being LGBTQ+ is a mental illness that needs to be cured—a theory that has been rejected by every major medical and mental health organization.

There is no credible evidence that conversion therapy can change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. On the contrary, research has clearly shown that these practices pose devastating health risks for LGBTQ+ young people such as depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, homelessness, and even suicidal behavior. The harmful practice is condemned by every major medical and mental health organization, including the American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, and American Medical Association.



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This bill would not impede on health care professionals' ability to facilitate their patients' coping, social support, and gender identity exploration. Rather, this legislation enacts professional standards for state-licensed mental health providers to clarify that conversion therapy is ineffective, detrimental, and irresponsible when applied to minors.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. In the interest of the health, safety, and well-being of all Michigan residents, we urge you to vote yes on the passing of HB 4616 and HB 4617.

Sincerely,

Sarah Warbelow, HRC Legal Director