

Dear Chair Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

My testimony is in opposition to House Bill 1332. I urge you to give this bill a Do Not Pass.

I am a North Dakota business owner of a mental health practice and a member of the LGBTQ+ community. It has been my honor to serve citizens of this state for nearly two decades. This bill is especially concerning as we know that conversation therapy leads to increased suicidal ideation and can cause long lasting trauma for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Conversion therapy is seen by most professional organizations as harmful and unethical. There is no empirical evidence to demonstrate conversion therapy as effective or safe. It should be noted that many professional organizations oppose the practice of conversion therapy including:

The American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American College of Physicians

American Counseling Association

American Medical Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychoanalytic Association

American Psychological Association

American School Counselor Association

American School Health Association

National Association of Social Workers

Just the Facts Coalition

World Psychiatric Association

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Please prioritize the life, health, and safety of your constituents, as well as professional ethics of licensed providers across our state, and give this bill a Do Not Pass.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to the state of North Dakota.

Best regards,

Winnie Austin, LMFT

Affinity Counseling & Education Center, Owner

Fargo, ND