



For Young LGBTQ Lives

January 21, 2025
North Dakota House
Human Services Committee

RE: Opposition to HB 1430 – Protecting North Dakota Youth

Members of the Human Services Committee,

I am writing on behalf of The Trevor Project, the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ+ young people, to express our concerns about HB 1430. This bill seeks to reinstate conversion therapy, a practice that has been widely rejected by medical and mental health organizations. We believe HB 1430 poses risks to the safety and well-being of youth and could undermine the integrity of the social work profession. We urge you to act promptly and consider the broader implications of this bill on North Dakota's youth and mental health system.

Conversion therapy is rooted in harmful, false, and outdated beliefs that LGBTQ+ individuals need to be 'cured.' **It has been unequivocally condemned by every major medical and mental health organization in the United States, including the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Medical Association.**

Decades of research reveal that conversion therapy profoundly harms the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth, contributing to elevated rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and even substance use. **Survivors of conversion therapy are more than twice as likely to attempt suicide and over 2.5 times more likely to report multiple suicide attempts within the past year.** The trauma caused by these harmful practices often leaves lasting scars, with many survivors experiencing self-harm and post-traumatic stress.

HB 1430 would undermine efforts to protect the well-being of LGBTQ+ youth and expose young people to practices that are overwhelmingly rejected by the medical and mental health communities. This bill could perpetuate practices that contribute to significant, long-term negative effects on mental health.

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Beyond the devastating mental health toll, conversion therapy imposes significant financial burdens, with the long-term consequences—ranging from treating depression to addressing substance use and suicide attempts—costing the U.S. over \$9 billion annually. These financial burdens impact individuals, families, healthcare systems, and taxpayers—resources that could otherwise be directed toward effective, evidence-based mental health care.

We ask that you consider the evidence and prioritize the safety of North Dakota's youth and the integrity of the social work profession in your decision-making by rejecting HB 1430. The risks posed by this bill must not be overlooked, and immediate action is necessary to safeguard vulnerable young people from further harm. Should you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at Tanner.Mobley@TheTrevorProject.org.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and for your dedication to the youth of North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tanner Mobley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tanner Mobley

Manager of State Advocacy