

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1430

House Human Services Committee on House Bill 1430

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This written testimony is presented in opposition to HB 1430, which would allow social workers to subject LGBTQIA+ individuals to conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is an abusive practice. It implies that being LGBTQIA is somehow a mental illness that needs fixing. It is not.

The American Medical Association (AMA)¹ and the American Psychiatric Association (APA)² both oppose conversion therapy. The APA has states: “The potential risks of reparative therapy are great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior, since therapist alignment with societal prejudices against homosexuality may reinforce self-hatred already experienced by the patient.”³

Failure to be accepted by friends, family, and the community at large increases the risk of suicide in the LGBTQIA+ community, increases the risk of depression, and increase the use of drug and alcohol.

The ND Board of Social Work Examiners is better equipped to understand the ethics of counseling individuals than the Legislature. These decisions should be entrusted to those with the education and expertise to provide effective care for those in need.

Please stop persecuting the LGBTQIA+ community with laws designed to hurt, not help and oppose HB 1430.



Debra L. Hoffarth

¹ *Sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts (so-called “conversion therapy”)* (<https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/conversion-therapy-issue-brief.pdf>)

² *Position Statement on Conversion Therapy and LGBTQ Patients* (<https://www.psychiatry.org/getattachment/3d23f2f4-1497-4537-b4de-fe32fe8761bf/Position-Conversion-Therapy.pdf>)

³ American Psychiatric Association, *Position Statement on Therapies Focused on Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation (Reparative or Conversion Therapies)* (2000)