

Dear New Hampshire House Legislators:

As advocates for the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of New Hampshire youth, including LGBTQ+ youth, we write to strongly urge you to oppose HB 1077 *including as amended*. The proposed amendments gut New Hampshire's ban on conversion therapy, eviscerating the exact protections for children under 18 the ban was enacted to provide. The amendment language is effectively a repeal of the ban.

Efforts to change someone's gender identity or sexual orientation, so-called conversion therapy, have been thoroughly discredited by every major medical association as both dangerous and ineffective. In recognition of this and of the profound harm that comes from subjecting children to these practices, this legislature passed, and Governor Sununu signed, a law in 2018 banning the practice on children under the age of 18.

The research is crystal clear about the damage caused by subjecting children to conversion therapy, including increased risk of suicide and other serious psychological harms. Nothing about that has changed since 2018. Banning the practice was the right thing to do then and it is the right thing to do now.

We are alarmed that the proposed amendment to HB 1077 includes a presumption that children consent to conversion therapy unless they can prove otherwise. The practice of conversion therapy on children has been unequivocally proven to be harmful, full stop. To put the burden on children to prove that conversion therapy was not welcome undermines the state's purpose in banning the practice – to protect children from a debunked, unsafe practice and ensure parents that their children would not be subject to such without their knowledge.

Licensed, reputable providers in New Hampshire know how to comply with the ban on conversion therapy as written in the 2018 law and have been doing so with pride. There is no justification for changing the law and in fact doing so will have devastating consequences for LGBTQ+ youth in New Hampshire. We urge you to vote ITL on HB 1077.

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