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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0950- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Conversion Therapy - Prohibitions and Causes of Action

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0950, **Conversion Therapy - Prohibitions and Causes of Action**

The American Psychological Association has declared that it has found *The evidence against “conversion therapy” - Insights from psychological research*¹

What is “conversion therapy?”

“Conversion therapy” refers to attempts to change a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or related behaviors. Sometimes called “reparative” or “reorientation” therapy, these practices stem from the scientifically discredited belief that being LGBTQ+ is a mental illness that should be cured. APA uses the terms “sexual orientation change efforts” (SOCE) and “gender identity change efforts” (GICE). These practices are **not evidence-based therapy**.

Decades of psychological research reveal these efforts are largely ineffective and pose serious risks of harm.

Maryland can and must protect against this serious harm to our LGBTQIA+ individuals by making it the policy in Maryland to treat its practice as medical malpractice.

This bill will clarify that injury resulting from conversion therapy is cognizable for purposes of a health care malpractice action; establishing certain procedures in an action for health care malpractice resulting from conversion therapy; removing the limitation on noneconomic damages to a claimant in an action for health care malpractice resulting from conversion therapy; etc.

The imposition of serious financial risk to practitioners of conversion therapy should help stop its practice within Maryland.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0950.

¹ <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/evidence-against-conversion-therapy>