



BILL: HB 1209 / SB 950 - Conversion Therapy - Prohibitions and Causes of Action

DATE: March 4, 2026 & March 10, 2026

POSITION: Favorable

COMMITTEE: House Judiciary & Senate Judicial Proceedings

Glisten(formerly GLSEN) Maryland, the state chapter of the nation's largest advocate for LGBTQ+ issues in K–12 education, supports HB 1209 (SB 950). For more than 34 years, our organization has worked to ensure that every student can learn in safe, inclusive, and affirming school environments.

While our work is primarily education-focused, we recognize the direct and lasting impact this issue has on LGBTQ+ youth, particularly those navigating school environments while also accessing mental health care.

This bill clarifies that psychological harm from conversion therapy is healthcare malpractice, and that people who experience this form of healthcare malpractice can seek economic damages, noneconomic damages, punitive damages, and attorneys fees and court costs.

Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) change efforts—known colloquially as “conversion therapy”—are a set of dangerous, outdated practices which pose significant risk and harm to people. The scientific evidence finds that SOGI change efforts are not only ineffective, but results in significant harm to people. It is associated with lower self-esteem, increased risk of anxiety, depression, and suicidality, and harms people’s ability to form close interpersonal relationships with others. The scientific evidence finds conversion “therapy” so damaging that the practice is considered unethical and every major mental health association, including but not limited to the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, has condemned its use.

Clarifying that psychological injuries caused by SOGI change efforts is a form of healthcare malpractice, and that people harmed by this practice can seek economic and noneconomic compensation, serves several important purposes. It both provides a path to restitution from people harmed by these practices and discourages mental health providers from attempting to engage in these unethical practices. These protections are particularly important for minors, whose access to mental health care is provided at the discretion of their parents.

Accordingly, Glisten Maryland respectfully requests a FAVORABLE committee report on HB 1209 / SB 950.

For further information, please contact Jaden Farris, jaden@md.glsen.org

ABOUT GLISTEN:

Glisten (previously GLSEN), the nation’s largest advocate for LGBTQ+ issues in K-12 education, has been dedicated to establishing inclusive schools and learning environments for over 34 years. Amidst increasing threats against LGBTQ+ youth nationwide, Glisten actively addresses harassment and discrimination by empowering educators, advocating for policy changes, and combating book bans.