

SB 950/HB1209: Conversion Therapy - Prohibitions and Causes of Action: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Judiciary Committee and Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE SB 950/HB 1209** during committee consideration or floor votes.

While I support protecting minors from harmful or coercive practices, this legislation is overly broad, infringes on parental rights, and threatens professional speech and therapeutic freedom. The definition of "conversion therapy" is vague and could encompass legitimate, evidence-based counseling that helps minors explore identity questions and address underlying trauma. **Banning voluntary, consensual talk therapy (even when requested by minors) based on the therapist's intent or the topic discussed sets a dangerous precedent for government regulation of professional speech.**

The private cause of action **invites abusive litigation** against therapists who simply discuss gender dysphoria, same-sex attraction, or related issues in good faith, potentially driving providers out of practice or discouraging open dialogue. **Maryland should focus on enforcing existing laws against fraud, coercion, or abuse rather than imposing sweeping bans that limit choice and professional judgment.**

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against SB 950/HB 1209** and oppose legislation that overreaches into therapeutic autonomy and free speech in mental health care.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important legislation affecting families and mental health professionals across Maryland.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals