

CHERYL C. KAGAN  
Legislative District 17  
Montgomery County

Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee

Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee

Joint Committee on Federal Relations



Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Suite 2 West  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3134  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3134  
Cheryl.Kagan@senate.maryland.gov

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony SB950: Conversion Therapy**

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 1PM

“Conversion Therapy,” also deceptively known as “reparative therapy,” refers to dangerous and discredited attempts to change a person’s sexual orientation.<sup>1</sup> These practices are not legitimate therapy. There is no scientific evidence that sexual orientation can be changed, and the medical community widely recognizes that these efforts cause harm.<sup>2</sup>

In 2018, Maryland passed a law that prohibited licensed mental health and child care practitioners from engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with minors. However, it did not establish a civil remedy tailored to the delayed and complex damages caused by these abusive practices. As a result, many survivors do not have a meaningful opportunity to seek justice.

Under current law, an individual may bring an action against a health care provider for professional negligence within five years of the psychological injury or three years from the time the injury was discovered or reasonably should have been discovered-- whichever occurs first. These timelines often fail to reflect the reality of conversion therapy. The trauma may take years to fully surface, and the shame and stigma surrounding the experience can delay survivors from recognizing or speaking about the damages they endured.

**SB950** addresses this gap by extending the statute of limitations for civil actions brought by victims of conversion therapy. It allows survivors younger than 18 at the time to bring a claim until age 40. Individuals who endured conversion therapy as adults may bring a claim within 10 years of the last “therapy” session.

This bill also mandates a 35% surcharge on professional liability insurance premiums for practitioners of conversion therapy. These funds will be earmarked to reimburse plaintiffs who successfully recover damages from health care malpractice claims.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Lies and Dangers of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Transporting the Burden of Justification: The Unethicality of Transgender Conversion Practices - PMC](#)

Additionally, the bill clarifies that courts may consider expert medical testimony, scientific literature, and other evidence that reflects the established professional consensus regarding the harmful effects of conversion therapy. This ensures that courts can fully evaluate the context and impact of these practices when determining liability and damages.

Injuries, under the legal definition in the bill, include mental health damages that often occur due to conversion therapy. A 2020 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that youth subjected to conversion therapy were more than **twice as likely to attempt suicide** and more than two and a half times more likely to attempt suicide multiple times.<sup>3</sup> A 2022 analysis published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Pediatrics* found that LGBTQ individuals who experienced conversion therapy were more likely to suffer severe psychological distress or depression, more likely to engage in illicit drug use, and more likely to attempt and die by suicide.<sup>4</sup>

In a 2024 survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth in Maryland, The Trevor Project found that 6% percent of respondents report being threatened with conversion therapy, and 2% were subjected to it.<sup>4</sup>

Four other states and the District of Columbia have enacted similar versions of this legislation.<sup>5</sup> The trauma caused by conversion therapy can last a lifetime. Survivors deserve the opportunity to come forward, pursue justice, and begin the process of healing.

**I urge a favorable report on SB950.**

<sup>3</sup> [Self-reported conversion efforts and suicidality among US LGBTQ youths and young adults](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Humanistic and Economic Burden of Conversion Therapy Among LGBTQ Youths in the United States.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [2024 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People by State. The Trevor Project.](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.slu.edu/law/health/lgbtq-policy-research/conversion-therapy-data.php>