

Friday, March 6, 2026

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am also a clinical psychologist working with trans youth and a practitioner of evidence-based therapeutic practices supporting members of the LGBTQ+ community. I am submitting testimony as a supporter of the Trevor Project, which is the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ young people. I am testifying in **support of SB0950: Conversion Therapy - Prohibitions and Causes of Action.**

Conversion “therapy” refers to practices that try to change a young person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Not only has research thoroughly demonstrated that these approaches do not work in changing individuals’ gender identity or sexuality<sup>1</sup>, there is also substantial evidence that these practices actually cause serious and even dangerous psychological and emotional harm, including increasing depression and risk of death by suicide<sup>2</sup>.

**Every major medical and mental health organization, including the American Psychological Association<sup>3</sup> and the American Psychiatric Association<sup>4</sup>, has condemned conversion “therapy” as harmful and ineffective.** Both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association have gone so far as to recommend that psychologists and psychiatrists do not practice these approaches because of the harm they cause clients.

As a clinical psychologist who works with LGBTQ+ people and people who have experienced trauma, I am especially concerned about these extremely damaging and misleading approaches. I also understand how long it can take survivors of medical or institutional trauma to come forward, and how crucial it is for those survivors to get justice when they have the courage to seek it.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sexual orientation change efforts among current or former LDS church members.* Journal of Counseling Psychology (2015) <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fcou0000011>

<sup>2</sup> *A systematic review of the efficacy, harmful effects, and ethical issues related to sexual orientation change efforts.* Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice (2021). <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1111%2Fcp.12377>

<sup>3</sup> *The evidence against “conversion therapy”*, American Psychological Association (October 10, 2025). <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/evidence-against-conversion-therapy>

<sup>4</sup> *Position Statement on Conversion Therapy and LGBTQ+ Patients.* American Psychiatric Association (2024). <https://www.psychiatry.org/getattachment/3d23f2f4-1497-4537-b4de-fe32fe8761bf/Position-Conversion-Therapy.pdf>

Consistent with that understanding, survivors of conversion “therapy” often wait years before they feel ready to talk about what happened to them. Maryland law doesn’t give them that time, but you can change that by supporting the passage of SB0950.

**Survivors in Maryland face an arbitrary legal time limit to take action against those who hurt them.** This policy is extremely harmful to survivors and is not supported by a clinical understanding of how people react to trauma, as the legal time limit often elapses before survivors are anywhere near ready to come forward.

SB0950 would fix that. Extending the statute of limitations gives survivors the time they actually need to process what happened, find support, and seek accountability on their own timeline. Passing these bills sends a clear message that what happened to survivors matters, and Maryland will not let those who harmed them walk away.

At a moment when LGBTQ+ protections are under attack at the federal level, what Maryland does matters. **This bill would communicate to LGBTQ+ Marylanders that Maryland is a state not only where their wellbeing matters, but where their very existence is welcome, supported, celebrated, and worthy of equal rights and protections with every other Marylander.** I am proud of our state’s standing as a comparative safe haven for LGBTQ+ people compared to many other states in the US, and in the strongest possible terms I believe it is imperative that we continue to protect LGBTQ+ people’s rights in the state of Maryland.

It is for all of these reasons that I very strongly urge you to **support SB0950: Conversion Therapy - Prohibitions and Causes of Action.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Katherine Blaha  
Baltimore, MD 21209