

Testimony Supporting SB0950
Conversion Therapy - Prohibitions and Causes of Action
FAVORABLE

March 6, 2026

The Honorable Chair, Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, and esteemed members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing to ask you to vote in support of Senate Bill 950 (SB0950). This bill contains several measures that would help prevent the scientifically discredited and extremely harmful practice of conversion therapy in Maryland.

This bill would recognize that injury resulting from conversion therapy is a basis for a health care malpractice action in Maryland law, establishes criminal liability for providing conversion therapy, and creates a basis for civil actions against a provider who violates the criminal law. Liability for providing conversion therapy to a minor would have no statutory time limitation for causes of action for damages. In addition, the bill imposes insurance premium surcharges upon licensed health care providers who provide conversion therapy and establishes an insurance fund to reimburse successful plaintiffs in malpractice actions relating to conversion therapy.

Variations in sexual orientation and gender identity represent normal expressions of human diversity. It is well-established that [being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is not a mental illness or disorder](#) and should not be pathologized. Nevertheless, due to widespread discrimination and bias against LGBTQIA+ people, some practitioners [continue to conduct conversion therapy](#), falsely claiming it can change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. However, conversion therapy does not work and has been [rejected by every mainstream medical and mental health organization](#) for decades, concluding that the practices are harmful, leading to [depression, anxiety, and self-destructive behavior](#). [Minors](#) are especially [vulnerable](#). Sometimes the extent of the harm is not fully realized until [years later](#).

Although Maryland law already prohibits practitioners from engaging in conversion therapy with minors and from using State funds for its provision, the well-documented and lifelong [harms](#) of this dangerous practice warrant the serious measures offered by SB0950. As a Maryland parent with loved ones in the LGBTQIA+ community, I feel strongly that our state needs to protect vulnerable people who might be harmed by conversion therapy. The creation of legal causes of action against practitioners that would inflict this harm—and establishing ways to help victims pursue legal remedies and damages resulting from it—are necessary and prudent measures. The cause of action for minors who suffer from conversion therapy should have no time limit, since the experience and its repercussions may not be immediately apparent.

For these reasons, please return a favorable report on SB0950.

Respectfully Submitted,
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