



House Judiciary Committee

March 4, 2026

House Bill 1209 – *Conversion Therapy – Prohibitions and Causes of Action*

**LETTER OF INFORMATION**

The Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW) was established in 1975 to promote and advance the specialization of clinical practice within the social work profession. Through our lobbying, education, community building, and social justice activities, we affirm our commitment to the needs of those in our profession, their clients, and the community at large. On behalf of the Maryland Legislation and Advocacy Committee of GWSCSW, we submit this letter of information on House Bill 1209.

GWSCSW strongly supports House Bill 1209's central goal of prohibiting the practice of conversion therapy with minors. Conversion therapy is widely regarded by major medical, psychiatric, and behavioral health organizations as a harmful and scientifically unsupported practice that poses significant risk to the mental health and safety of LGBTQ youth. Evidence collected by reports, such as "It's Still Happening" from the Trevor Project, documents that conversion therapy continues to be practiced across the country, including by licensed mental health professionals, and is associated with elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality.

Clinical social workers are trained in evidence-based, trauma-informed, and ethically grounded approaches to care. The documented harms of conversion therapy conflict with social work values of dignity, self-determination, and person-centered practice. We appreciate that House Bill 1209 seeks to reinforce Maryland's commitment to protecting vulnerable youth from this damaging practice.

While GWSCSW supports the intent of House Bill 1209, we respectfully raise concerns regarding the proposed repeal of the noneconomic damages cap for conversion therapy-related civil causes of action. Noneconomic damages caps serve an important role in maintaining balance within malpractice and civil liability systems by promoting predictability and stability in professional liability insurance markets for licensed providers, including clinical social workers.

Creating an exception to existing caps for a specific category of malpractice claims may have broader implications for insurance underwriting, premium costs, and provider participation—particularly in a behavioral health system already facing workforce shortages and access challenges. These potential unintended consequences warrant careful consideration.

GWSCSW affirms that conversion therapy should be prohibited and that individuals harmed by such practice deserve meaningful remedies. At the same time, we respectfully urge the Committee to carefully consider whether repealing the noneconomic damages cap is necessary to achieve the bill's intent and to weigh the broader impact on Maryland's mental health workforce.

We appreciate the legislature's leadership in protecting LGBTQ youth and stand ready to work collaboratively on policies that both ensure accountability and preserve access to high-quality behavioral health care.

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