

Craig, Sondra

From: Elsen, Nikki
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2022 1:55 PM
To: Craig, Sondra
Subject: FW: 22-0636: AN ORDINANCE to create Sec. 32-191 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse prohibiting Conversion Therapy.

From: Byron Holz <byronholz@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2022 1:48 PM
To: Elsen, Nikki <Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org>
Cc: Alesha Schandelmeier <aleshas@7riverslgbtq.org>
Subject: 22-0636: AN ORDINANCE to create Sec. 32-191 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse prohibiting Conversion Therapy.

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I wish to speak in support of a ban on conversion therapy. While I am not a citizen of La Crosse, I work in the city. As a former teacher, I have watched the struggles as young people try to decipher their identities. LGBTQ+ are the only minority that generally doesn't have a parent of that minority to help them navigate this discovery. Having family that reject or try to cure an orientation or identity not only hinders development but leaves permanent scars. I'm confident others have addressed the findings from medical and psychological experts on the increased risks of suicide, addiction, depression, and other health issues such treatments cause. Instead I wish to counter the two main justifications for allowing such barbaric practices.

Parental Rights Much of the rhetoric surrounding issues of race, gender, and orientation in schools cite parental rights of determination for their children. Parents do not have absolute control of their children. As a society and as a government, we are charged to protect minors from abusive practices, even if they are inflicted by parents or guardians. When I was a teacher, I was a mandatory reporter. In other words, I could be prosecuted if I failed to report any abuse I suspected. How can we advocate for the protection of young people yet allow disproven, discredited, needless, and harmful "treatments" for something that doesn't need correction?

Religious Freedom I hear religious freedom used as a justification for blocking discussions of orientation and gender identity. It is often used as a reason to subject young people to these discredited cures for who they are. While I favor religious freedom, I don't feel it is or should be absolute. We don't permit children to be beaten or otherwise abused in the name of religion. Polygamy isn't legal, whatever someone's faith permits. Female genital mutilation isn't allowed as a religious freedom. Trying to justify conversion therapy as a religious right is not acceptable.

I hope La Cross City Council protects the right of young people to grow up healthy and well-adjusted. Take the necessary steps to block conversion therapy.

Ward Holz