

From: Peter Steele <peter@couleerock.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 9, 2022 2:50 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Please OPPOSE Sec.32-191

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To the La Crosse City Council,

I am writing to encourage you to vote AGAINST adopting ordinance Sec. 32-191 prohibiting conversion therapy.

I recognize many people are passionate about this topic and the religious community in the United States have not always handled these differences in an honoring way. However, I feel very strongly there are religious implications to the proposed ordinance that are not taken into consideration in the way it is currently written. I believe that means this ordinance will be imposing on our constitutional right of freedom of religion.

Additionally, the stated goal of the proposed ordinance is to “protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of the City of La Crosse, especially the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including non-binary, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth.” However, the ordinance, as written, only allows for “practices or treatments...including psychological counseling,” that *support* same-gender sexual orientation. Psychology Professor Lisa Diamond, herself a lesbian activist, has done extensive research on the nature of sexual orientation. Professor Diamond summarizes her data in a fascinating lecture at Cornell University entitled “Just How Different Are Female and Male Sexual Orientation (you can view it here: http://cdnsecakmi.kultura.com/s/p/537811/sp/53781100/serveFlavor/entryId/0_1n9ng95r/v/11/flavorId/1_lw5u23vf/forceproxy/true/name/a.mp4?aeauth=1654633254_1beaf7bd018a2e6ef7566624eb532f2a)

One important observation she makes is that it’s quite common for attraction to change over time saying, “Perhaps the only way to be certain whether an adolescent’s same-sex attraction will persist into adulthood is to observe whether they actually *do*.”¹ If the scholarly research of this well-regarded professor, herself a lesbian, is to be accepted as valid (which it most certainly should) we must conclude that at the very least what protects the “health, safety and

welfare...especially the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including non-binary, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth” is to allow input from all perspectives as they grow, develop and learn who they are, not legislate the information our youth are allowed to receive. By allowing only input that supports same-gender sexual orientation we may actually be causing the same type of damage to our youth—forcing them to conform to *our* perceptions of their sexual orientation—this proposed ordinance is trying to protect against.

Although it may not be the intended purpose, this proposed ordinance feels like it’s trying to legislate religious freedoms. So, I am writing to ask you to vote AGAINST adopting ordinance Sec. 32-191 prohibiting conversion therapy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

God bless,

Peter

¹ See Lisa Diamond and Rich C. Savin-Williams, “The Intimate Relationship of Sexual-Minority Youths,” in *The Blackwell Handbook of Adolescence*, ed/ Gerald R. Adams and Michael D. Berzonsky (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 396

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