

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Pastor OUMC <pastor@onalaskaumc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 9:53 AM  
**To:** Rucker, Caley  
**Subject:** Clergy support for conversion therapy ban

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Caley, please pass this on...

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Mayor Reynolds,

It has come to my attention that some conservative Christians are petitioning you to veto the ban on conversion therapy passed by the City Council recently, and are planning a rally at the courthouse this afternoon.

As a Christian pastor, I represent the other side of this issue. Onalaska United Methodist Church recently voted by an 82% margin to become a Reconciling Church - a church that is fully welcoming of LGBTQ+ people in the life and ministry of our congregation. (<http://www.onalaskaumc.org/reconciling/>)

During our year of research, discussion, and prayer in preparation for our vote, we learned of the deep psychological harm caused by conversion therapy, which can even lead to self-harm or suicide. A prime tenet of our Methodist tradition is "Do no harm," and it clear that conversion therapy is harmful.

Therefore, I fully support the ban on conversion therapy in the City of La Crosse and urge you to let it stand. We have many members that live in La Crosse who also support this position.

Blessings in your discernment and leadership of our community!

Peace and grace,

Park Hunter

[pastor@onalaskaumc.org](mailto:pastor@onalaskaumc.org)

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M. Park Hunter, pastor  
Onalaska United Methodist Church  
212 4th Avenue N  
Onalaska, WI 54650

608-783-3380 office x22

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YouTube: [youtube.onalaskaumc.org](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Facebook: [facebook.com/onalaskaumc](https://www.facebook.com/onalaskaumc)

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Tracie Blumentritt <tblumentritt@uwlax.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 12:23 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Conversion ban

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dear Mayor Reynolds,

I am writing to express my support for your decision to ban "conversion" therapy in La Crosse. This is the responsible decision and you are in good company in your decision to ban it. For many years, all of the major psychiatric and psychological organizations in the country (and most in Europe) have issued policy statements in opposition to this so-called "therapy." (See statements below).

[https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Policy\\_Statements/2018/Conversion\\_Therapy.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Policy_Statements/2018/Conversion_Therapy.aspx)

<https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/About-APA/Organization-Documents-Policies/Policies/Position-Conversion-Therapy.pdf>

<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/sexual-orientation>

[https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/resolutions/reparative-therapy-resoltution-letter--final.pdf?sfvrsn=d7ad512c\\_4](https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/resolutions/reparative-therapy-resoltution-letter--final.pdf?sfvrsn=d7ad512c_4)

I'd also like to emphasize that the problem is not just that it's ineffectual; most importantly, it has been shown to be harmful to gay youth. Empirical research has shown that it is associated with increases in depression, anxiety, and suicidality in kids who have been exposed to it. (See article below).

<https://whatweknow.inequality.cornell.edu/topics/lgbt-equality/what-does-the-scholarly-research-say-about-whether-conversion-therapy-can-alter-sexual-orientation-without-causing-harm/>

Further, this practice directly violates the fundamental medical/psychiatric/psychological ethic of "first, do no harm." Please be aware that the people who espouse this practice are not bound by the Hippocratic oath. They are usually ministers or other types of religiously-oriented counselors who are not regulated by any medical or psychiatric boards or organizations. They can, essentially, do whatever they want with our youth. Sadly, this has sometimes resulted in tragic consequences.

I urge you to follow the lead of many states and municipalities who have already taken steps to ban this damaging practice. If we don't protect our vulnerable youth, who will?

Thank you.

Tracie Blumentritt, PhD

Professor of Psychology  
341C Graff Main Hall



## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Suzanne K. Bassette <sk.bassette@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 12:36 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Cc:** aleshas@7riverslgbtq.org  
**Subject:** Please DO NOT veto the Conversion Therapy Ban

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Dear Mayor Reynolds,

I write this email to implore you to maintain the ban on Conversion Therapy as it was passed 6/9/22.

I do not feel this ban impedes nor detracts from the role of supportive parenting, religious freedom, nor freedom of speech. I would say the ban protects these rights on behalf of the minors the ordinance is protecting.

I do believe that open dialogue with parents, their kids, religious institutions, area therapists, schools, the courts, etc, should be openly supported and encouraged. I believe if someone is questioning sexual orientation and/or gender identity, that they should have the right to access resources to work through those questions within an objective, yet supportive framework. As parents, clergy, educators, therapists, and legislators, it's important that we recognize and encourage dialog and understanding. It is wrong to decide for that questioning person and work to inhibit or prevent their true autonomy, personality, and very identity.

Please use this as an opportunity to bring together those opposed with the ones who see our kids for their authentic selves, and help them to realize that a child who feels honored and supported will speak with the trusted adults around them.

Thank you for the work you do for our community.

Suzanne K. Bassette

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Melissa Hellwig <mhellwig@thetherapyplacelax.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 12:44 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** REGARDING CONVERSION THERAPY BAN

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Hello Mr. Mayor!

I understand you've been asked by a number of community members to veto the council's recent decision to ban conversion therapy in the City of La Crosse. The basis for their argument is that "the ban outlaws La Crosse parents and guardians from making decisions around private matters regarding sexuality." I am sure you're aware of the discussion thus far and the absolutely overwhelming body of evidence against performing conversion therapy. Conversion therapy is not only unsafe, it is proven to be harmful, making it fundamentally an issue of child protection. We don't let parent's do dangerous and harmful things to their children. This should be no exception. Please, in the interest and safety of our LGBTQ children, do not veto the ban. It is an important protection and needs to stay in place.

I'd like to leave you with one more thought.....We used to also say that domestic violence was a 'private family matter,' but look at how that has changed. Making it a crime to hurt a family member is not at all a new concept.

Thank You,

Melissa Hellwig, MS, LPC, PMH-C  
Owner, Psychotherapist  
The Therapy Place of La Crosse

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Madi Proksch <madiproksch@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 12:48 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Please don't veto the conversion therapy ban

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dear Mayor Reynolds,

As a queer student, I think I can speak for all of us when I say vetoing the conversion therapy ban puts us in great danger mentally, and possibly even physically as well. I hope you can understand our fear, and I hope you can make La Crosse a city where we can express ourselves freely. We are counting on you.

- A concerned citizen

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Su s <cariveauemery1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 1:01 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** About vetoing the ban against conversion therapy.

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Hello Mr. Reynolds,

Today, as an LGBTQ+ minor and student, I do fear conversion therapy. I fear waking up and being sent off and raped because of my sexuality. I do not want to be traumatized because of other people's beliefs, who should love who, and what should love what. Many, many LGBTQ+ humans are being hurt, abused, and even killed because of who they love, trying to convert them into a certain sexuality will only damage them. This email was all over the place, I know, but seriously, all queer minors around the world are being raped by "conversion therapists" to "make them heterosexual." In all, vetoing the ban against conversion therapy will only make a lot of the younger generation despise the government, because they don't feel safe or heard out by anyone.

Please consider my remarks, I thank you very much for reading this. I am looking forward to your reply.

- Emerson Cariveau  
- 608-860-8002  
- Student at Logan Middle

**Rucker, Caley**

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**From:** Will Van Roosenbeek <willv@7riverslgbtq.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 1:48 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Conversion Therapy Ban

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Mr. Mayor,

I want to send you a message regarding the Conversion Therapy Ban. I ask you please do NOT Veto it. This is an opportunity for the City of La Crosse to walk the talk! We support the LGBTQ community keeping the ban is the greatest action the City has ever taken for us. We need to see this kind of support!!

I am so disappointed in the people trying to stop the ban. They do not understand the detrimental impact conversion therapy has on humans. This ban does not stop them from talking to their children or even having a therapist, ministers, etc... from talking to their children! It means that people cannot treat your child with starvation tactics, beatings, electro shock, or any other non-human brutal actions to try and force them to deny their sexuality or gender Identity/expression.

I hope you will choose the future our young people need and deserve!!

Sincerely,

Will Van Roosenbeek  
1236 Mississippi St.



## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Deb Bassett <debb@7riverslgbtq.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 1:56 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Conversion Therapy Veto

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Hi Mayor Mitch!

I sure thought this issue had been put to rest, but here we are again! I'm not sure that those protesting today understand how abusive and brutal it is.

At any rate, you know I had to write to you! I have complete faith in you, in your beliefs and your ethics, so I have faith that you won't veto the ban. I'm writing, then, to tell you that I back you and support you in upholding the ban.

Thanks for everything that you do!!!

*Deb Bassett*

Administrative Assistant

Volunteer Coordinator

The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection

230 6<sup>th</sup> Street South

LaCrosse, WI 54601



**Rucker, Caley**

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**From:** KATHY MULLINER <kmulliner@prodigy.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 2:08 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** conversion therapy

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

When I read that people were wanting you to veto the conversion therapy ban, I would like to believe they were knowledgeable about the effects conversion therapy has on young people. This is an article that discusses the dangers of reparative therapy:

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>

I was trying to find the actual wording on this ban, but I couldn't find it. I found two sources that said religious leaders were exempt: *Conversion "therapy" laws prohibit licensed mental health practitioners from subjecting LGBTQ minors to harmful conversion "therapy" practices that attempt to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. These laws do not restrict the practice among religious providers (Family Connections and the Human Rights Campaign).*

It saddens me to think that an adolescent would be subjected to a 'therapy' that may be bad for them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Respectfully,

Kathy Mulliner

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Page <pageboucher19@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 2:19 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Please do not veto the conversion therapy ban.

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dear Mr. Mayor,

Please allow passage of the conversion therapy ban.

Children are humans. They do not exist only to serve as an extension of their parents. They are autonomous and should be treated as such. Allowing a "counselor" to attempt to undermine someone's existence, in any context, is unconscionable.

Please do not bend to the intolerance of community members who seek to have this ban vetoed. You can't counsel someone into denying their own existence without serious damage to the individual's mental health. It's disgusting that some community members would rather risk anxiety, depression, and suicide in their children than love them unconditionally and let them express themselves freely.

If there was "therapy" to make a cisgender person transgender, or a heterosexual person homosexual it simply wouldn't work. You can't change who a person is or who they are attracted to. The only thing this type of "therapy" is capable of is teaching the counseled individual they aren't accepted. They aren't loved. They have no place here. And that they don't actually exist. It's not ok to treat anyone that way and conversion therapy has no place in this city.

Sincerely,  
a concern non-binary parent of two,

Page Boucher  
(They/Them)

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Allmon Dixon, Allison L <alallmon@gundersenhealth.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 2:49 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Conversion therapy ban response

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Mayor Reynolds,

Please do not veto the conversion therapy ban.

While I cannot speak as a representative of Gundersen, I am a pediatric psychologist and am writing you as a citizen, psychologist, and parent. I want to extend my enthusiastic support for upholding the vote that bans conversion therapy for sexual orientation and gender identity. I am profoundly grateful that I have the privilege of working with many of our most vulnerable youth and know they deserve the best care, care that is based in science, care that is ethical and above all does not cause harm.

I am shocked, saddened, and perplexed that this vote was uncertain and that there is a possibility that this be vetoed, given that EVERY major mental health organization has issued warnings about the risk of dangers associated with change efforts. Conversion therapy is not only harmful, but unethical. While change efforts, like conversion therapy, may encourage people to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity, there is no scientific evidence that change efforts reduce sexual attraction or change gender identity. Instead, these change efforts can lead to other problems such as depression, increase in suicidal thoughts, increased suicide attempts, sexual problems, low self-esteem, stigmatize LGBTQ+ people and stigma can increase minority stress or stress that comes from invalidation and non-acceptance. I have included resources and citations for the information I have provided. My colleague, Dr. Gutowski, below also provides salient information and research below that I hope you will consider.

I urge you to protect our patients and your citizens and ban conversion therapy.

Thank you,

**Allison Allmon Dixon, Ph.D.**

References:

Mallory, C., Taylor, N.T., & Conron, K.J. (2019, update). Conversion Therapy and LGBT Youth. The Williams Institute, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. Available at <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/demographics/conversion-therapy-and-lgbt-youth/>

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Weiss, E.M., Morehouse, J., Yeager, T., & Berry, T. (2010). A qualitative study of ex-gay and ex-ex-gay experiences. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, 14(4), 291-319.

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From: Gutowski, Erin M <[emgutows@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:emgutows@gundersenhealth.org)>

Sent: Monday, June 6, 2022 5:37:18 PM

To: [richmonda@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:richmonda@cityoflacrosse.org) <[richmonda@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:richmonda@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [woodardc@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:woodardc@cityoflacrosse.org) <[woodardc@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:woodardc@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [schwarzr@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:schwarzr@cityoflacrosse.org) <[schwarzr@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:schwarzr@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [neumeisters@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:neumeisters@cityoflacrosse.org) <[neumeisters@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:neumeisters@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [janssenb@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:janssenb@cityoflacrosse.org) <[janssenb@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:janssenb@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [trostj@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:trostj@cityoflacrosse.org) <[trostj@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:trostj@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [sleznikowl@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:sleznikowl@cityoflacrosse.org) <[sleznikowl@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:sleznikowl@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [happeld@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:happeld@cityoflacrosse.org) <[happeld@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:happeld@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [weaverj@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:weaverj@cityoflacrosse.org) <[weaverj@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:weaverj@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org) <[neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [kahlowc@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:kahlowc@cityoflacrosse.org) <[kahlowc@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:kahlowc@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [kielm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:kielm@cityoflacrosse.org) <[kielm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:kielm@cityoflacrosse.org)>; [mindelm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:mindelm@cityoflacrosse.org) <[mindelm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:mindelm@cityoflacrosse.org)>

Cc: Allmon Dixson, Allison L <[alallmon@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:alallmon@gundersenhealth.org)>; Alesha Schandelmeier <[aleshas@7riverslgbtq.org](mailto:aleshas@7riverslgbtq.org)>

Subject: Conversion therapy ban response

Good evening, City Council Members,

I recently read the City of La Crosse Judiciary and Administration proposal and vote to ban conversion therapy for sexual orientation and gender identity. I have also read the editorial letter that Dr. Van Wyk has sent you and while I respect Dr. Van Wyk as a colleague, the information she has shared with the committee is outdated and incorrect.

As the co-founder and medical lead for the Pediatric Gender Clinic at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, I am enthusiastically in support of banning conversion therapy for sexual orientation and gender identity. I am happy to also share with you the most recent research in the field, based on numerous research studies and articles with the most up-to-date information possible at your request. Referring to the ordinance 22-063 Section 32-191 (a) (2), the well-documented, prevailing opinion by medical and psychological communities that conversion therapy is ineffective and causes serious emotional distress that can lead to psychological trauma has been very well-established and I will not reiterate all of the medical literature that pertains to such findings. I will, however, reiterate the importance of providing safe spaces for young individuals to explore their gender identity and sexual orientation without detrimental influences that can cause long-term damage and psychological harm.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a professional organization of over 67,000 pediatricians and has created a Section on LGBT Wellness, which I am a member of. This Section on LGBT Wellness continues to review the most up-to-date literature and research on LGBTQ+ health, informing the AAP's policy statements to help ensure that all children are safe. In a Recent policy statement from October of 2018, titled "Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support of Transgender and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents" (Pediatrics, Volume 142, Issue 4), authors appropriately state: "'Conversion' or 'reparative' treatment models are used to prevent children and adolescents from identifying as transgender or to dissuade them from exhibiting gender-diverse expressions. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has concluded that any therapeutic intervention with the goal of changing a youth's gender expression or identity is inappropriate. Reparative approaches have been proven to be not only unsuccessful but also deleterious and are considered outside the mainstream of traditional medical practice. The AAP described reparative approaches as 'unfair and deceptive.'" At the time of this writing, \* conversion therapy was banned by executive regulation in New York and by legislative statutes in 14 other states as well as the District of Columbia."

A similar statement was made by the American Medical Association in 2019, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in 2018, as well as the American College of Physicians in 2015. For more information on those medical organizations that have made statements discouraging conversion therapy, please see the Human Rights Campaign website listed here: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/policy-and-position-statements-on-conversion-therapy><<https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrc.org%2Fresources%2Fpolicy-and-position-statements-on-conversion-therapy&data=05%7C01%7Caeshas%407riverslgbtq.org%7C0429c8f41f7448808b3d08da480bc38f%7C2586f463d71440b8912bd8b67b8fd41d%7C0%7C0%7C637901512637945026%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAilCjQljoIV2luMzliLCJBTi6k1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=SMg3T53IMsyryhFECwEJHzYEa1ctSdY5j8z6bSZqaE%3D&reserved=0>>

As you can see, these views are not new. These statements from our governing medical bodies are based on hundreds of studies. The statistics that Dr. Van Wyk shared with you was based on a handful of articles that have significant validity concerns and have since been heavily scrutinized within the medical community, as their findings have not been consistent with the current medical literature based on robust data from multiple medical institutions worldwide. I believe her intent was to spark community dialogue, but I also think it is important to remind ourselves that our children and community deserve evidence-based, gender-affirming care through inclusive, supportive medical and mental health teams. Also, I believe that she was making the inference that all professionals who attempt to question a child's gender identity would be seen as attempting conversion therapy and would possibly be arrested, but if you look at the data in other states, it just prevents children from being exposed to mental health providers with harmful biases that lack of developmentally appropriate, open exploration of sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression, without any pre-determined outcome. Trained professionals who build therapeutic relationships have the ability to provide gender-affirming care, which (by definition), allows youth and adults to have safe spaces to explore their gender and sexuality without judgement and without a solitary outcome. Gender-affirming, inclusive mental health support

creates structure and safety for diving into one's behaviors, as well as the nuances of all their identities, emotions and trauma. As a pediatrician who works with many LGBTQ+ youth in our community, there are many ways we can affirm someone's gender that have nothing to do with hormones or surgeries. These families are looking for evidence-based education, support for their child and judgement-free spaces to ask questions, while their children are looking for spaces where they can just be themselves.

Please see the attached PDF for more information on conversion therapy. We are always happy to meet and discuss further, if you have questions.

Thank you for your time and for protecting our most vulnerable youth,

Erin Gutowski DO, MPH, FAAP  
Gundersen Pediatrics  
She/Her pronouns  
LGBTQ+ inclusive provider

Allison Allmon Dixon, Ph.D.

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Parlow, James W <jparlow@winona.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 3:14 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Important information on Conversion Therapy

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dear Mayor Renolds,

I see that there is a group of persons that are asking you to veto the 'ban on conversion therapy' which the judicial committee passed.

I am going to say I am an ally for the transgender community up front to be transparent.

I have investigated and researched what it means to be transgender for more than 10 years to try and understand why these persons are an issue. I have come to the conclusion that they are no more an issue than left-handed persons. Not so long ago, before we knew the scientific/medical/genetic reasons for the difference, we persecuted them and tried to train, teach and sometimes tortured them all because they were different.

I could give other examples, but the issue here is the difference between what we were taught based on old outdated knowledge of genetics and medicine.

Most persons were taught there are only XX and XY persons, when because we now can see DNA and its' components, we know that is not true.

We know there are Chimeras, persons with two sets of different DNA. We know that there are *guevedoces*, persons born with female external genitalia, but when reaching puberty because of testosterone naturally produced, they grow male external genitalia.

We also know that changing just one tweak of one gene can cause male mice to grow ovaries. What is to say that this type of tweak can occur by natural phenomenon in humans. 1000s of other tweaks occur causing things like albinism, Autism, Downs syndrome, Hemophilia and Progeria to name just a few caused by mutations in the DNA.

My research has led me to the NIH Human Genome Research Institute, where they are working on locating the gene, protein or combination in human DNA which can cause a fetus to begin life in one direction and then change directions before being born. An example would be a fetus developing female at first, the neurological development progressing until week 7. At week 7-8 the DNA tells the body to give testosterone in abnormal amounts to the fetus. This is when the external genitalia is developed.

Before this occurrence the tissue of the fetus is indistinguishable as far as male or female, but because of the inappropriate introduction of testosterone, develops male genitalia.

The baby is born with a neurological base that is still female but externally looks male. This also would work adversely if a fetus was developing male, but when the time came, did not get the testosterone required to develop male genitalia, and remains female by default.



My point to all of this is simple, without a knowledge of what we know about human DNA and development, trying to 'convert' someone is again what society tried to do with left-handed persons calling them the 'Devil's Spawn' and people who used herbal medicine that society called witches. Societies loudest voices get it wrong because they don't understand and fear what is different.

Maybe the 'conversion' that needs to be done is actually educating people what we know now about human DNA and genetics, instead of staying with what education from the earlier times that stated there were on two possibilities.

Please do not veto the ban on conversion therapy.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. Parlow

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Connor Obgartel <obgartel9483@uwlax.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 3:32 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Banning Conversion Therapy for Minors in La Crosse WI

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dear Mayor Reynolds,

I am emailing you to express concern about the bill being put forward that would ban conversion therapy in the case for minors in LaCrosse. I want to put forward my support for the bill and hope that you do as well. With the amount of research and studies behind the practice finding it not only antiquated but also more damaging than it is helpful, I hope that you allow this bill to be passed in order to protect the children that would be affected by this. As a college student and local of the area, I want to be active in the community and proactive in protecting the minors that would be potentially harmed by the retraction of this bill.

Thank you for your service of this community as the Mayor, and I hope all is well.

- Connor Obgartel

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Louise Schmal <dschmal98@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 3:35 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Pleas support the Conversion Therapy ban

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Good afternoon,

I am reaching out to you to share that not everyone is in support of a veto.

I have been active in this discussion for some time now, though I have not been very outspoken. I have watched the arguments turn from one reason to the next - demonizing the Church, until another pastor spoke up against conversion therapy - the structure of the family, until I spoke up and explained it was the threat of Conversion therapy that helped destroy my relationship with my late father - now it is the right to assemble. Each reason that has been brought forth for a veto simply put, is a riot of fear mongering to only protect those parents and family members who wish to hurt their child by only the name of love, none of the emotions.

I do not believe that my words will affect you more than perhaps a look at the subject line, but I implore you, please help protect out LGBTQIA+ children. They already have so much stress, you can help take this burden from their shoulders.

Thank you for your time,  
Louise Schmal  
Work- (608) 792-2389

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Caitlyn F Konze <cfkonze@viterbo.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 15, 2022 11:51 AM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Web Form

**Importance:** High

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

To Mayor Mitch Reynolds,

I see the protestors outside City Hall and I weep. I beg you to pass the ordinance that bans conversion therapy in La Crosse. Please allow me to tell you the story that has my gut in knots right now.

I am a follower of Jesus Christ. The God of my faith has helped me through many dark valleys in the past, continues to speak to me today, and will always be there for me in the future. I consider it a miracle that I still have any faith at all considering the abusive spiritual practices I've both survived and witnessed. These abuses have directly resulted in one death.

Katie was my friend. She was innocent, compassionate, and goofy. She spent most weekends either riding her horse or singing with the worship team. She was a few years younger than me, so when I went to college at UW-La Crosse we lost contact for a while. Katie got into UWL about the time I graduated. I tried to contact her, support her, set up a lunch date or two, but she would always reply with short answers and back out of plans we made. It wasn't like her. Something felt off.

The next time I saw Katie was at her funeral. I didn't find out until after the service that it was suicide. No one in the church would talk about it, but her brother confirmed my suspicion. She was seeing the pastor regularly for counseling, but it didn't help. I have no insight into Katie's sexual orientation. That may not have been relevant to her struggles. What I do know is that our pastor was NOT qualified to be her therapist. Perhaps if Katie has gone to a certified cognitive behavior therapist, she could have gotten help. She could have had more than two decades to live. But instead, everyone kept telling her that she just needed to pray harder. She wasn't getting better because her faith wasn't strong enough. All she had to do was rely more on God and less on herself.

What does this have to do with conversion therapy? Pastors are NOT qualified to counsel people on gender identity or sexual orientation just as they are NOT qualified to counsel someone who is clinically depressed. By passing this city ordinance, Mr. Mayor, you could very well be saving lives. "Let parents parent," one protestor's sign says. "Let pastors counsel on Biblical beliefs," says another. Well I say Katie's parents and our pastor are accomplices to manslaughter because they refused her the help she needed. *Shame on them*. Katie was a child of God and her life mattered. It could have been a beautiful one. The protestors outside your windows are asking no more than to let people control other people. They may believe they are doing the right thing by protesting, but my experience and my faith tell me otherwise.

I could have ended up like Katie. My mental health plummeted in 2018. I was on the verge of considering suicide as a viable option. But I didn't let Christian dogma stop me from getting the help I needed. I'm on anti-anxiety medication, which works great. I'm seeing a therapist which is helping me heal. I am closer to Jesus now than I ever was under the heavy weight of severe depression. Had I relied solely on my pastor to pastor me, I probably wouldn't be here writing this letter.

Please, and again I say PLEASE pass this ban. It will bring our community one step closer to breaking the dogmatic stigma against people getting help by the experts that ARE trained and qualified to help them.

Your La Crosse resident,



**VITERBO UNIVERSITY**

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Caitlyn Konze (she/her)  
Information Services Manager  
Viterbo Library  
608-796-3267  
[cfkonze@viterbo.edu](mailto:cfkonze@viterbo.edu)

## **Rucker, Caley**

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**From:** Lori Lunney <lunney8@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 15, 2022 12:55 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Web Form

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Thank you, Mayor Reynolds, for holding fast to the ban on Conversion Therapy in La Crosse.  
Sincerely,  
Lori Lunney

Sent from my iPhone

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Jay M Lokken <jay@ed3solutiongroup.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 16, 2022 10:34 AM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Cc:** Kahlow, Chris; Mindel, Mackenzie; Ken Riley  
**Subject:** Thank you 🇺🇸

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Mitch, Chis and Mackenzie,

Thank you supporting the conversation therapy ban and not giving into pressure to veto it. We understand the situation and the continued discrimination against the LGBTQ community. Voting to ban conversion therapy sends a message of support that intolerance and hate has no place in La Crosse.

Thanks again,

Jay Lokken and Ken Riley

## Rucker, Caley

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**From:** Steve Manson <stevenm755@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 17, 2022 9:11 AM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** support ban on conversion therapy

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Mayor Reynolds,

As a physician and citizen of La Crosse I ask you please accept the will of the people and the Council and NOT veto the measure to ban conversion therapy.

Homosexuality is considered neither a disease in the field of medicine or criminal offense in the arena of law. Thus, therapy is not an appropriate term, as there is nothing to be cured. Many offering these change efforts are not licensed mental health practitioners and have no business dabbling in this field.

The American Psychological Association, the nation's body of experts on mental health, came up with this statement in 2009. "The task force conducted a systemic review of the peer-reviewed journal literature on sexual orientation change efforts and concluded that efforts to change sexual orientation are unlikely to be successful and involve some risk of harm, contrary to the claims of SOCE

practitioners and advocates". In the field of medicine we do not accept or follow such types of treatments as to do so could be considered contrary to the standard of care and potentially malpractice.

In 2015 the APA released another authoritative statement on this topic. "The APA expressed support for a report released today by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration calling for an end to the practice of 'conversion therapy' for children and youth."

Many states and municipalities across the country have banned this ineffective and potentially dangerous practice which has its basis in antiquated ideas with religious overtones of persecution.

I ask that you support the ban on "conversion therapy" in our community. If you have questions or desire further information on the subject I can connect you with local experts in the field of Psychology.

Sincerely,  
Steven Manson M.D.  
2261 Coulee Drive  
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601



## Rucker, Caley


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**From:** Devine,Carolynn J <CJDevine@gundersenhealth.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 17, 2022 9:29 AM  
**To:** Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Conversion therapy ban

\*\*\* CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. \*\*\*

Dr. Mr. Mayor,

Please do not stop the ban on conversion therapy. Conversion therapy should NEVER happen. Sexual orientation is not a problem that needs to be fixed and conversion therapy can actually cause harm to people. Yes, parents should be allowed to parent as they see fit, EXCEPT when it causes harm to the child. This is why we have child protection laws! These children need protection from their parents/caregivers in the same way they would if parents were neglecting to provide lifesaving medical care or if they were being perpetrated on by those same caregivers. Please do the right thing and protect these children.

Carolynn Devine, CSW, MHA   
Social Services  
Gundersen Health System  
608-775-4058