

Twenty-five years ago, I was nineteen years old, a Christian, and same sex attracted. I decided to pursue a therapeutic approach aimed at helping me bring my sexuality into agreement with my faith. As a young person dealing with same sex attractions, I enjoyed the benefit of good psychotherapists and faith-based organizations to help me bring my sexuality into agreement with my faith as a Christian. I was not coerced or harmed by either; in fact, I was helped greatly. This ordinance would criminalize help and psychotherapeutic resources for those who are in profound need. As a youth, it would have taken away my power of choice to self-determine my own desired trajectory for my life.

Faith and sexuality are extremely important issues. For me, my faith guides the expression and experience of my sexuality, not the laws of the land or current cultural understanding. There are many others like me who feel the same way, young people who are making different choices about their same sex attractions and gender confusion than the social norm. They are denying themselves and yielding to Jesus. And in doing so, are finding their true selves.

Through talk therapy, wise counsel and spiritual disciplines, I experienced a profound shift in my sexual orientation. **I am glad I made this choice, and I am grateful for the freedom to self-direct my counseling.** The benefits have been paramount: I have been married to my wife (a woman) for seventeen years and I have three beautiful children.

THEREFORE, I support therapeutic choice for all Minnesotans, and I urge you to do the same. HF 2156 and the harm it will bring to many people of faith must be stopped.

I encourage you to get to know us. Listen to our stories. Ask us questions about the choices we have made regarding our sexuality. Ask us about our faith and how it guided those very important decisions. Do not marginalize us with ordinances. And, do not criminalize our understanding of freedom.

Sincerely,

Nate Oyloe

Oppose HF 2156

Good morning, Representatives,

I am a survivor of childhood sexual, molestation by a family member. It went on for a couple years, before I was able to say stop. This is the account of the effects it had on me, and why I think it is so important to oppose HF 2156.

Because of my abuse, I thought the world was made up of 2 kinds of people: girls who are victims and men who are abusers. Feeling betrayed by my own body, I began to reject myself, and began hating my own body. After telling my already broken father, I had no protection still from the abuse.

I realized, only I could take care of myself, at 9 you do what you know. I could not stand looking in the mirror at myself. Only saw a pathetic girl who made her brother abuse her.

The most traumatic day: I was being his victim, and I felt myself break inside, the pain was too much and I felt a separation from my body and soul. I did not feel like I was real from that day on, and recall asking siblings if I was really here, I even recall touching my arms and face to make sure I was "here"

I began wearing my brothers clothes, and felt stronger about myself. After a couple years of wearing men's clothes, I felt better about myself, because I was separated from myself. Someone in my family sought options for help for me. Professionals in the medical community recommended a sex change!

I followed their instructions and changed my name and began living my life pretending to be a boy. This seemed like the best option, yet all the while, I always knew something was not right.

For 7 years I sought therapy, I actually enjoyed it so I kept going. I got healthier, but still felt conflicted internally. The feeling of my being a "square peg" in a world of round holes, it seemed clear I would just have to accept that living as a man would be my "norm."

After 30 years of living as a man and being in various relationships with women, a pastor spoke the truth to me. As I received discipleship and support, my attraction and desire for women began to leave.

I continued going to church, and found more freedom, I knew I didn't belong in the GLBTQ life anymore. I moved out of my girlfriends, began finding my identity, and destiny in God. My attraction to the same sex is completely gone. And I am living, FINALLY feeling like a round peg, in a world of round holes. My church loved me, they didn't judge me, they didn't keep bringing up my own sins, they just walked through life with me, and I found true freedom.

My only regret? That someone didn't have the love and decency to tell me there were other options than a "Gender Dysphoria." The attempts at suicide that could have been avoided. The depression, the constant living in discomfort.

My desire is people will still have the right to choose who they are, if someone chooses homosexuality, that's their choice, and we cannot force people to be anything different. BUT.. if someone struggles with same sex attraction, and they do want help sorting it out, who is the ANYONE, to say to that child, they won't get to receive any other option.

I still believe in living in a free nation. Minnesotans must be free to choose the counseling that is right for them.

This is my testimony, of a broken, lost little girl, who desperately needed love and protection.

Please oppose HF 2156 and allow other little girls access to the counseling freedom they want and need.

Sincerely,

Luca Groppoli

Oppose HF 2156

My name is Peggy Doherty, and I am asking you today to oppose House File 2156.

I lived in a same sex relationship for 18 years of my life and was in therapy for the entire time. I struggled with depression, anxiety which I took medication for, and suicidal thoughts. I was wanted a therapist that would encourage and empower me, and someone that would help me to wrestle with my thoughts and fears. I was not looking for someone who wanted to change me, but someone who could help me to know myself. Over the years, I saw a lesbian therapist who changed my life. She didn't push an agenda: my therapist didn't tell me I was a lesbian just because I experienced same sex attraction. Instead, she let me talk about my struggle with unwanted same sex attraction freely, she allowed me to ask questions, and she helped me to dig deep into how my life experiences were affecting my thoughts and feelings.

My therapist had the freedom to allow me to set my own goals and that's why I no longer identify as a lesbian, no longer take depression or anxiety medication, and now live a very full and satisfying life. House File 2156 would put a political agenda ahead of people like me.

We live in a culture that allows men and women to change their bodies, why shouldn't we be allowed to change our minds?

Please vote no on this bill. Our kids deserve it.

OPPOSE HF 2156

My name is Chris Morbitzer. I am a Saint Paul resident.

When I was in middle school I began to experience sexual attraction to other boys. I had many questions about where I belonged, what I felt, and what I believed. And like many at this age, I began to form my own identity. This included interests in music and social sciences, faith in God, and a desire one day to have a wife and children. I chose my identity and it was more important to me than anything in its way. So I tried with all my will to make my same-sex attractions go away.

For many years, I could not stop my attractions and they became stronger. I began to engage in sexual behavior with some of my peers. Each time, I anticipated that I would feel fulfilled and connected. Instead, after each occurrence, I felt emptier and farther away from the path I wanted for my life. I lost hope.

I chose to see a licensed professional counselor. Our sessions were consistent with modern evidence-based therapy. We discussed shame and addiction, my behaviors, and my desire to live consistently with my beliefs and choices.

My time in therapy was transformational. I found that with professional help, I could change my behaviors. Therapy reduced my shame, fear, anxiety, and my same-sex attractions. This all occurred in an atmosphere of unconditional care, gentleness, and compassion.

Today my life is radically different than it was when I was in high school. I no longer desire to have sex with other men. I am happily married to my incredibly beautiful wife. I feel more alive than I ever have before. I don't wish to change who I am in order to pursue a gay lifestyle.

I found hope and happiness because I chose to change my unwanted sexual behavior and had the opportunity to find help. My life, my story, is possible because I made a free choice and my counselor had the freedom to affirm and encourage me in my journey.

The proposed legislation before us would make my story illegal. It would snuff out my story in future generations and declare in a loud voice that I and others like me are not welcome in Minnesota.

It would remove the freedom of licensed therapists, who are already ethically committed to a high standard of care, from helping clients follow their dreams. There are young men and women today who experience same-sex attractions and want to pursue a different path than what mainstream culture declares they must follow. This would deny them the opportunity to realize the life of their choosing.

We have made lives of our own choosing because we received qualified, ethical, compassionate, and evidence-based care that supported our choices. Please oppose this flawed proposal and let us know that our stories matter too in Minnesota.