

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee.

My name is Dale Witherington. I lead a ministry organization called Restore Minnesota which began as a voluntary chaplaincy ministry here at the Capitol campus.

I am here to oppose HF2156.

I was present when the author of the bill declared before the House committee that this bill was based on two facts: First, that people are born gay, and Second, they cannot be changed.

Let's examine the so-called facts.

1. Is it true that people are born gay? In 2019, the largest international genetic study that has ever been conducted on this issue, a study that focused on 480,000 people from the United States and the United Kingdom, a group approximately 100 times larger than any previous study of the link between genetics and same-sex attraction, concluded there is no so-called "gay gene". In other words, according to the professionals at the Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research, the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, and Massachusetts General Hospital's Analytical and Translational Genetic Unit, people are NOT born gay. To be fair, they concluded that same-sex attraction is shaped by a complex mix of genetic and environmental influences. To say people are born gay is a half-truth at best.
2. Can gay people change and become straight? This bill's premise is based on the belief that gay people cannot change. That is a flat-out lie. You will hear or have already heard from those whose lives have been completely transformed from gay to straight either because they sought counseling and wanted to change, or they experienced a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and He changed them. There are thousands who will give you their personal stories of the truth of this transformation.

So, the premises of the bill are false.

Finally, this bill is also likely in violation of Civil Rights laws, as well as being in violation of the 1st Amendment of the Constitution since it makes no provision for professionals to be able to help those who want to be released from unwanted same-sex attraction. This is a private, my body, my choice, healthcare issue. Let the healthcare professionals do healthcare. Vote "No" on HF 2156.