

Minnesota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MINNESOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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March 2, 2022

House Preventative Health Policy Division
State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members of the House Preventative Health Policy Division,

On behalf of more than 1,000 pediatricians and pediatricians-in-training who are members of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP), it is my pleasure to offer our strong support for HF 2156.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has been joined by many of the nation's leading medical organizations, including the Minnesota Medical Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the American Psychiatric Association, in recognizing the potential dangers of conversion therapy. These organizations long ago recognized that homosexuality and gender diverse identities are not pathological disease states, but rather variations of human sexuality. Conversion therapy presumes that something that is central to a person's identity is wrong or abnormal. There is no scientific evidence to support a need for conversion therapy, as there is no pathological condition. The concept of conversion therapy lacks scientific credibility and clinical usefulness.

The research into conversion therapy paints a clear picture of its potential harm, particularly to adolescents and young adults. Conversion therapy can lead to poor self esteem, self-harm, guilt, anxiety, depression, and possibly suicide. When adolescents question their sexual identity or gender, it is entirely appropriate for parents and guardians to seek counseling and assistance from mental health practitioners. Studies have demonstrated that gay and lesbian adolescents have higher rates than their heterosexual peers of mental health concerns, including depression and suicide, but positive interventions can lead to resiliency and success in reaching a stable, productive adult life. Conversion therapy is not the answer. It is coercive, dangerous and ineffective.

Minnesota's pediatric community urges your support of HF 2156, an important effort to protect young people from the potential harms associated with unnecessary, disproven therapies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheldon Berkowitz, MD, FAAP".

Sheldon Berkowitz, MD, FAAP
President, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics