

January 16, 2023

Re: HF16 (Hollins)

Dear Chair Fischer and Members of the Human Services Policy Committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to share Minnesota Social Service Association's support of HF16 to prohibit the practice of conversion therapy with children and vulnerable adults. The Minnesota Social Service Association (MSSA) is made up of over 4,000 health and human service professionals statewide. Our members cover the health and human service spectrum —mental health providers, social workers, case managers, etc. —and are employed by for-profit and non-profit entities, as well as state and local government agencies. MSSA believes in the protection and advancement of human rights for LGBTQ+ Minnesotans. Many of our members work with LGBTQ+ identifying Minnesotans including in mental health treatment and this issue is important to them and their clients.

Conversion therapy is dangerous, and this bill would prohibit this practice on our most vulnerable Minnesotans. An overwhelming majority of those who have been subjected to conversion therapy have experienced long-lasting and serious mental health effects as a result including depression, anxiety, lowered self-esteem, internalized homophobia, self-blame, intrusive imagery, and an increased risk of suicide. These effects run counter to the goal of care and counter to the standard of practice our members aim to provide.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support on behalf of our members and the clients they serve. MSSA seeks the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights in Minnesota and this bill would ensure that LGBTQ+ Minnesotans are protected from this dangerous practice. Please reach out to us with questions, comments, or concerns at msancartier@mnsa.org.

Sincerely,

Michelle SanCartier
Minnesota Social Service Association
MSSA Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

Beth Ringer
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