



March 25, 2026

The Honorable Zack Stephenson
Chair, House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Opposition for HF 4138

Dear Chair Stephenson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Jenna Brownfield, and I am a Licensed Psychologist in the Twin Cities specializing in mental health for bisexual, trans, nonbinary, and QTBIPOC individuals. I am writing to express my formal opposition to HF 4138. In my practice, I work to empower those who often feel left out of broader culture. My concern with this legislation is that its approach to content filtering, age estimation/verification, and access limitations creates a systemic barrier between vulnerable youth and the critical information and access to community they deserve.

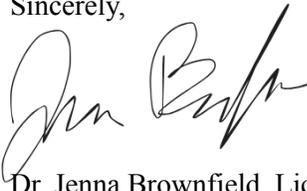
While the bill is framed as a safety measure, the reality of "content suitability" filters is that they are rarely neutral. We have seen historically that automated systems frequently flag educational content regarding gender identity, sexual health, and queer history as "sensitive" or "inappropriate." Identity-based content or educational content about identity development get misinterpreted as sexually explicit content. By incentivizing platforms to over-filter to avoid the significant legal liabilities found in this bill, the state is effectively scrubbing the digital safe spaces where LGBTQ+ youth find the vocabulary to understand their own lives. For a young person questioning their identity, these filters do not just remove "addiction"—they remove the only mirrors they have to see themselves reflected in the world. Almost every client I have, whether they are 18 (and just became a legal adult) or are in their 60s, tell me the same thing: I wish I could've come out sooner, I wish I could've learned who I was sooner. This is why it is essential for us to protect LGBTQ+ youth and their ability to be affirmed in who they are. When youth don't have access to affirming resources and community, at best they spend their adulthood grieving this lost time, and at worst they die by suicide before making it to adulthood.

Furthermore, the provisions that grant parents approval authority over their digital access through rigid time limits and monitoring are concerning. If an LGBTQ+ child is in a hostile or unsupportive home, their digital space is often their only private laboratory for self-discovery and can serve as their primary connection to crisis resources. Many youths seek peer support or research discussions on forums late at night when the pressure of performing a specific identity for their family becomes exhausting. By mandating the infrastructure for a parent to "shut off" this connection, Minnesota is providing a tool for isolation that could be weaponized against a child's mental health.

The provisions about age estimation and verification are also concerning. More surveillance does not inherently mean more safety. Having to estimate someone's age means more monitoring and data collection on youth. This would mean less digital privacy. Age verification also proves problematic, as that may require submitting IDs which could out someone's gender identity or their citizenship status. Age estimation and age verification are both provisions that threaten a youth's privacy and are particularly concerning for marginalized youth who need privacy to safely learn about themselves and build affirming community.

Finally, the ban on profile-based feeds for those under 16 ensures that a teenager looking for trauma-conscious, queer-affirming resources will instead be met with a generic, heteronormative status quo. I believe this bill defaults the internet to a "one-size-fits-all" model. If a child cannot find the specific, specialized content that reflects their humanity, they are left to believe that they are an anomaly. A "neutral" or "one-size-fits-all" model is harmful not only for mental health reasons, but also economically. Research shows us that anti-LGBTQ approaches end up costing our country the most. For example, conversion therapy for youth has been found to have a \$9.23 billion economic burden (including harms like substance use and suicide). Comparatively, affirmative therapy results in \$6.19 billion dollars in savings compared to conversion therapy and even saves \$1.81 billion dollars when compared to no therapy or a 'neutral' support (Forsythe et al. 2022). Knowing how a heteronormative or one-size-fits-all approach costs our youth in terms of their health but also costs us billions of dollars as a community, I urge you to consider the implications of LGBTQ youth losing access to affirming online communities. Therefore, I urge lawmakers to reconsider HF 4138, and vote no.

Sincerely,



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Citation: Forsythe A, Pick C, Tremblay G, Malaviya S, Green A, Sandman K. Humanistic and Economic Burden of Conversion Therapy Among LGBTQ Youths in the United States. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2022;176(5):493–501. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.0042