

Dear Members of the House Human Services Policy Committee,

It was an honor to speak before you yesterday in opposition to HF 16. I wanted to submit a follow up clarification. As I listened to people testifying in the hearing, it was clear that there were broadly varying perceptions and claims of what exactly conversion therapy is. Some of the descriptions branched into areas that are clearly abusive and criminal.

For the sake of clarity on this bill, I would suggest you discuss and add a very specific definition of conversion therapy, including very definite parameters of methods that are permissible versus methods that are illegal / criminal.

Going into the hearing, my perception from reading the bill was that conversion therapy predominantly related to verbal counseling that helps an individual move in a heterosexual direction, if that is their desire. This understanding is the basis on which I wrote my speech (the text of which follows this letter below).

This basic form of counseling should be a supported option in health care. However, I do not support any methods that are abusive, coercive or physically damaging to individuals.

Thank you very much for your consideration, and for seeking to set policies that trusts individuals to make the health decisions that are right for them, in consultation with their doctors or counselors, without government intrusion.

Sincerely,

Karin Miller

Public Testimony Opposing HF 16 – A Ban on Conversion Therapy – 1/18/23 by Karin Miller – a wife, mother, and educator.

Good morning, Members of the House Human Services Policy Committee. My name is Karin Miller. I am a wife, mother and educator. It is an honor to speak before you today.

As we discuss HF 16 today, we must remind ourselves that the Government CANNOT legislate or control what people believe. The Government CANNOT legislate or control how people think. Any attempt to do so is a violation of our First Amendment Rights.

In order to be free, we the people must have choice and options (within the bounds of what is legal and moral).

We must not forget that true freedom goes both ways! In order to be free, people must have the ability to choose to go this way (right), or to go that way (left)! To choose option A, or option B.

To eliminate one option entirely, be it A or B, eliminates freedom.

HF 16 seeks to eliminate one option – counseling that moves in a heterosexual direction. It would only legally allow counseling that supports homosexual orientations. It is important to note that medical transitioning is not without serious risks, and that medically transitioned individuals are committing suicide at a remarkably higher rate than the general population.

Where there is risk. There must be choice. This is why it is critical to allow access to a full range of counseling options and trust individuals to make the decisions that are right for their own health and sexuality.

After all, if we can claim: “My Body, My Choice!” when it regards to abortion, then we can also make the same claim when it comes to conversion therapy.

The logic behind the support of these two bills – HF 1 and HF 16 – is completely untenable. You cannot have it both ways.

In regard to minors, no one should be sexualizing our children, whether toward heterosexual or homosexual behaviors. The least you can do to protect minors is to leave all options of support available to them. Let's not allow our children to become victims in the battle over sexual ideology.

Legislators, if you truly believe in Health Freedom, you must vote NO to HF 16! Prove to your constituents that you trust them to make the best decisions regarding their own health and sexuality and that they can trust you to protect their First Amendment rights.

HF 16

A bill for an act

relating to health; prohibiting conversion therapy with children or vulnerable adults; prohibiting medical assistance coverage for conversion therapy; prohibiting the misrepresentation of conversion therapy services or products; amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, sections 256B.0625, by adding a subdivision; 325F.69, by adding a subdivision; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 214.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:
Section 1.

[214.078] PROTECTION FROM CONVERSION THERAPY.

Subdivision 1.

Definition.

"Conversion therapy" means any practice by a mental health practitioner or mental health professional as defined in sections 245.462, subdivision 17, and 245.4871, subdivision 27, that seeks to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender. Conversion therapy does not include counseling that provides assistance to an individual undergoing gender transition, or counseling that provides acceptance, support, and understanding of an individual or facilitates an individual's coping, social support, and identity exploration and development, including sexual-orientation-neutral interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices, as long as the counseling does not seek to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Subd. 2.

Prohibition.

(a) No mental health practitioner or mental health professional shall engage in conversion therapy with a client younger than 18 years of age or with a vulnerable adult as defined in section 626.5572, subdivision 21.

(b) Conversion therapy attempted by a mental health practitioner or mental health professional with a client younger than 18 years of age or with a vulnerable adult shall be

considered unprofessional conduct that may subject the mental health practitioner or mental health professional to disciplinary action by the licensing board of the mental health practitioner or mental health professional.

EFFECTIVE DATE.

This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 2.

Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 256B.0625, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 5n.

Conversion therapy.

Medical assistance does not cover conversion therapy as defined in section 214.078, subdivision 1.

Sec. 3.

Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 325F.69, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 7.

Advertisement and sales; misrepresentation of conversion therapy.

(a) For purposes of this subdivision, "conversion therapy" means services or products that are intended to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, including efforts to change behaviors and gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same gender.

(b) No person or entity shall, while conducting any trade or commerce, use or employ any fraud, false pretense, false promise, false guarantee, misrepresentation, false or misleading statements, or deceptive practice by advertising or otherwise offering conversion therapy services that could reasonably be interpreted or inferred as representing homosexuality as a mental disease, disorder, or illness, or guaranteeing to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

