

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM24.32	ACTION			Ward: All
---------	--------	--	--	-----------

Supporting Bill C-8, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code to prohibit Conversion Therapy - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Paul Ainslie, recommends that:

1. City Council urgently request the Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, and the Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth to express support for the reintroduction of Bill C-8, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Conversion Therapy) as soon as possible in the upcoming session of Parliament, and to encourage the Government of Canada to pass and implement this legislation in an expeditious manner.

Summary

On March 9, 2020, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-8, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Conversion Therapy), which broadly seeks to make forcing a person to undergo conversion therapy services, practices or treatments, and to advertise or profit off those activities, criminal offenses. This Bill should be supported by City Council to protect the life and dignity of all its LGBTQ2S+ residents in Toronto and across Canada.

Conversion therapy is defined by Bill C-8 as:

“... a practice, treatment or service designed to change a person’s sexual orientation to heterosexual or gender identity to cisgender, or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour. For greater certainty, this definition does not include a practice, treatment or service that relates

- (a) to a person’s gender transition; or
- (b) to a person’s exploration of their identity or to its development.”

The purpose of “conversion therapy”- sometimes also referred to as “reparative therapy”- is to change a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual attraction or sexual behaviour to reflect a straight, heterosexual identity that matches the sex assigned at birth. This “therapy”

often targets LGBTQ2S+ youth, particularly young men, seeking to coerce individuals into rejecting their own identity, including through the use of emotionally traumatic, physical assault and/or drugs to make individuals associate their LGBTQ2S+ identities with shame and pain.

According to the 2019-2020 interim results of the Community-Based Research Centre's "Sex Now Survey" as many of 47,000 sexual minority men have experienced conversion therapy in Canada. Many Provinces and states have sought to ban the practice, including Ontario in 2015. However, the practice still continues.

The Canadian Psychological Association, the Canadian Psychiatric Association and the Canadian Paediatric Society, have all denounced conversion therapy as a practice due to its harmful effects. Further to this, no credible health or medical organization supports conversion therapy. Most health organizations do however recognize that the resulting trauma can lead to participants developing struggles with mental health and addiction, often leading to homelessness and suicide.

The proposed federal legislation would define conversion therapy as any service, practice or treatment designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual, gender identity to one that matches the sex assigned at birth, or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual sexual attraction or sexual behaviours.

Bill C-8 proposes to create five new offences that seek to prohibit: causing a minor to undergo conversion therapy; removing a minor from Canada to undergo conversion therapy abroad; causing a person to undergo conversion therapy against their will; profiting from providing conversion therapy; and advertising an offer to provide conversion therapy.

Conversion therapy is a terrible practice that must be stopped in all its forms. City Council should express support to the Government in Canada to see Bill C-8, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Conversion Therapy), reintroduced and passed as soon as possible.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM24.32