

Monday 6 January 2020

Dear Committee Secretary
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention
Committee

Subject: Submission concerning the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

I am forwarding my concerns relating to this proposed Bill which amends the current Public Health Act 2015 to prohibit the practice of Conversion Therapy by health service providers in Queensland.

I appreciate the definition of Conversion Therapy available on the Queensland Parliament website (see explanatory notes section), however I can see from other sources that the Term **“Conversion Therapy”** refers to pseudoscientific practice of trying to change an individual's sexual orientation from homosexual or bisexual to heterosexual using psychological or spiritual interventions.

Also the term **“Health Service Providers”** is not clearly defined and could include Ministers of religion, Church organisations and family.

With the question of the definition of these terms in view, the proposed Health Legislation Amendment Bill could -

- Cause parents to fear being fined for speaking with their child (who identifies as part of the LGBTIQ community) in regards to gender dysphoria, gender reassignment surgery and any other issue that affects their child’s wellbeing.
- Cause Ministers of religion to fear being fined for speaking to individuals (that identify as part of the LGBTIQ community) who are seeking help in regards to their identity.

I believe that the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 is a breach of human freedoms including Freedom of Religion, Freedom of conscience and Private Liberty.

The Proposed Bill will -

- Inhibit members of the LGBTIQ community from seeking counsel from a health service provider (in relation to issues such as – gender dysphoria, gender reassignment surgery and hormone treatment), because according to the proposed bill the health service provider may not be able to give professional advice due to fear of being fined.

- Limit health service providers from providing advice to members of the LGBTIQ community regarding their psychological, physical and spiritual wellbeing because the advice could be deemed as “Conversion Therapy”.
- Not protect health care providers that refuse to assist a patient (who identifies as a member of the LGBTIQ community) who is planning to undergo Gender Reassignment surgery, or provide advice to a patient because the advice opposes their spiritual convictions or conscience.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my views and concerns.

Kind Regards,

Marie Harding-Smith

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Mobile phone - [REDACTED]