



January 16, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Re: The E-1833 (Conversion Therapy) Petition

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to thank you for the progress you have achieved in the past few years towards equality for LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people. We applaud you for the government's recent "apology to LGBTQ2 federal public servants," and for your call to all Canadians to commit to ending discrimination against LGBTQIA2S+ persons.

We fully support the [E-1833 \(Conversion Therapy\) Petition](#) that calls upon the government of Canada to: a) enact legislation banning conversion therapy to minors in Canada; b) enact legislation prohibiting transporting minors outside of the country for such purposes; and c) have conversion therapy included in the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code, to protect children from abuse.

We encourage your government to address the issue of conversion therapy - the widely discredited practice of trying to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, based on the premise that being gay or transgender is disordered and can be cured.

We ask the government of Canada to include a broad definition of conversion therapy in its responses to this issue, legislative or otherwise. We recommend the definition include "any formal therapy or practice that has the goal of changing a person's sexual or gender identity through any treatment that is hostile to a person's identity, is unethical, spiritually and psychologically damaging, and not supported by evidence."

While bans on conversion therapy for minors may be the most effective legislative route, we believe they do not go far enough. We ask that any proposed legislation be broadened to include people of any age, as well as condemn any therapy or practice where the goal is trying to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.



Religious groups, churches, Christian counselors and ministers, do not run programs or counselling that are easily identifiable as conversion therapy. They may fall outside of the accountability of credentialing bodies. They may brand their programs as sexual healing, breaking sexual addictions, or submitting to scripture, to obfuscate their efforts to change sexual orientation or gender identity. These efforts include such practices as intensive prayer regimens that often result in deep shame and internalized self-hatred, applying discredited psychoanalytic theories about causation, referring to LGBTQIA2S+ identity as demonic and conducting exorcisms, and/or attempts at gender-conforming behaviour modification. This toxic combination leaves individuals deeply wounded and often traumatized. We must therefore do everything we can to work towards preventing further trauma.

The United Church of Canada affirms that human sexual orientations and gender identities are gifts from God, part of the marvellous diversity of creation. We affirm the value and dignity of all people. Therefore, we reject any therapy or practice that labels LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit people as abnormal, broken or otherwise not whole individuals. We strongly condemn the practice of conversion therapy or any efforts that attempt to change a person's sexual or gender identity through treatment that is hostile to a person's identity

Thank you for your continued support of the LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit community. We look forward to further action and conversation on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



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