

Conversion Therapy

LWV does all advocacy on researched based positions. I reviewed all LWV positions and found that the LWV does not have a position specifically on conversion therapy. The LWV does have extensive positions on mental health & mental health treatment of youth. The LWV position states that treatment of youth should be based on evidence based and strength based best practice in the field. (LWV Appleton youth advocacy & services.) Currently, all oversight organizations for the field of mental health, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Counseling Association agree that there is no scientific basis for conversion therapy and that conversion therapy does not comply with best practice in the field.

**“The American Psychiatric Association** does not believe that same-sex orientation should or needs to be changed, and efforts to do so represent a significant risk of harm by subjecting individuals to forms of treatment which have not been scientifically validated and by undermining self-esteem when sexual orientation fails to change. No credible evidence exists that any mental health intervention can reliably and safely change sexual orientation; nor, from a mental health perspective does sexual orientation need to be changed.”

The **APA** states “Interventions aimed at a fixed outcome, such as gender conformity or heterosexual orientation, including those aimed at changing gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation, should not be part of behavioral health treatments”

**NASW** condemns the use of Sexual Oriented Change Efforts or so-called Reparative Therapies by any person identifying as a social worker or any agency that identifies as providing social work services. Public dollars should not be utilized for programs that support SOCE.

**American counseling association** - the American Counseling Association opposes conversion therapy because it does not work, can cause harm, and violates our Code of Ethics. It is an attempt to treat something that is not a mental illness.

Clearly, conversion therapy is wrong, harmful and unethical. The question is does the city have the appropriate oversight capabilities to deal with a ban. The LWV believes that it does with the amendment proposed by Dr. Vogel and passed by the public health committee. The proposal would require a referral to the oversight agency for whatever licensed professional was found to be utilizing these methods which appears to be the appropriate response. As a retired mental health professional, I can tell you that such a referral which could result in the loss of my license, livelihood and career would have more effect on me than a monetary fine.

Because of the lack of evidence-based best practice and the amendment of Dr. Vogel, the LWV supports the proposed conversion therapy ban.