

**RESOLUTION 236**  
**ST. LOUIS CITY BOARD OF ALDERMEN**  
**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT A BAN ON CONVERSION THERAPY**

**WHEREAS**, a record number of municipalities across the country are condemning conversion therapy practices that adversely affect our communities and families. Conversion therapy, also known as reparative therapy, ex-gay therapy, or sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts, is a range of discredited practices aimed at changing one's sexual orientation or gender identity. These harmful practices are based in the false claim that being LGBTQ is a mental illness that should be cured.

**WHEREAS**, 15 states plus Washington, DC, including our neighboring state of Illinois, have enacted laws or regulations to ban conversion therapy against minors by licensed medical providers, and many bills have been filed in similar states, including Missouri's Youth Mental Health Preservation Act.

**WHEREAS**, it is the well documented, prevailing opinion of the medical and psychological community that conversion therapy has not been shown to be effective and that it creates a potential risk of serious harm to those who experience it. Position statements, articles, and reports have been published by the following organizations: the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American School Counselor Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Counseling Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Pan American Health Organization.

**WHEREAS**, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) asserts that "conversion therapies" (or other interventions imposed with the intent of promoting a particular sexual orientation and/or gender identity as a preferred outcome) lack scientific credibility and clinical utility. Additionally, there is evidence that such interventions are harmful and "such efforts may encourage family rejection and undermine self-esteem, connectedness and caring, important protective factors against suicidal ideation and attempts." As a result, "conversion therapies" should not be part of any behavioral health treatment of children, adolescents, or adults;

**WHEREAS**, the American Psychological Association issued a resolution, Appropriate Affirmative Responses to Sexual Orientation Distress and Change Efforts that states, "We advise parents, guardians, young people, and their families to avoid sexual orientation change efforts that portray homosexuality as a mental illness or developmental disorder and to seek psychotherapy, social support, and educational services that provide accurate information on sexual orientation and sexuality, increase family and school support, and reduce rejection of sexual minority youth;" and

**WHEREAS**, momentum has been building in legislative sessions across the country this year for bans which prohibit state-licensed mental health professionals from practicing conversion therapy for anyone under 18; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2018 Williams Institute report estimates that 698,000 LGBTQ adults have received conversion therapy in the United States, including 350,000 who received it as adolescents. The report estimates that 20,000 LGBTQ youth, ages 13-17, will receive conversion therapy from a licensed healthcare professional before the time they reach 18 in one of the states in which the practice is not banned..

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Aldermen has a responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people of St. Louis, especially the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including LGBTQ youth. Young people who experience family rejection, often in the form of conversion therapy, face especially serious health risks. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were 8.4 times more likely to report having attempted suicide, 5.9

times more likely to report high levels of depression, and 3.4 times more likely to use illegal drugs compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection.

**WHEREAS**, additionally, the Board of Aldermen has a responsibility to ensure St. Louis is a city that is open and affirming to all, including LGBTQ individuals and families. As a city that strives to respect and celebrate its diversity, the Board of Aldermen affirms that being LGBTQ is not a disorder, disease, illness, deficiency, or shortcoming; and

**WHEREAS**, banning the harmful practice of conversion therapy issue is not about Republicans or Democrats, nor conservatives or liberals. It's not about religious values. It's about basic human decency. It's about the fact that it's impossible to fix something that was never broken in the first place; and

**WHEREAS**, a national community of professionals in education, social work, health, mental health, and counseling have determined that there is no scientifically valid evidence that supports the practice of attempting to prevent a person from being LGBTQ; and

**WHEREAS**, such professionals have determined that there is no evidence that conversion therapy is effective or that an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity can be changed by conversion therapy; and

**WHEREAS**, such professionals have also determined that conversion therapy is not only ineffective, but is substantially dangerous to an individual's mental and physical well-being. It has also been shown to contribute to depression, self-harm, low self-esteem, family rejection and suicide.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Aldermen opposes all portrayals of LGBTQ youth and adults as mentally ill due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and supports the dissemination of accurate information about sexual orientation, gender identity, and mental health, and appropriate interventions in order to counteract bias that is based in ignorance or unfounded beliefs about sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Aldermen resolve to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all people and their families, including LGBTQ youth, against exposure to serious harms caused by "conversion therapies" or sexual orientation or gender identity change efforts; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the St. Louis Board of Aldermen have a compelling interest to support this resolution to condemn conversion therapies and sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts in St. Louis and across Missouri.

Introduced on this 25th day January 2019 by:

**The Honorable Christine Ingrassia, Alderwoman 6th Ward**

Adopted this 25th day of January 2019 as attested by:

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Louis Galli  
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

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Lewis E. Reed  
President, Board of Aldermen