

7th September 2021

Kia Ora to the Justice Select Committee,

Our names are Bryant McIntyre and Mia Sutherland.

We are writing on behalf of Rūnaka Taiohi o Ōtautahi / Christchurch youth council (CYC) regarding the prohibition of [Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill 56-1 \(2021\)](#). CYC is a youth-led organisation made up of roughly 35 diverse young people aged 12 - 24 from all across Ōtautahi. We are a non-partisan organisation in terms of aligning with political parties. We can, however, take stances on political matters. In this case, the young people within the CYC unanimously agreed that we are supportive of this bill and the sentiment to end conversion therapy in Aotearoa.

This bill supports the achievement of the goals in the Christchurch Youth Action Plan. Especially relevant are clauses 6.2.1 and 6.2.3;

6.2.1 Christchurch leads the way in promoting youth inclusion and addressing harmful stereotypes within society and the media.

The presence of conversion therapy in this country contributes to the harmful stereotypes which exist around the LGBT+ community. For example, you can 'pray the gay away, and sexuality, gender identity, and expression are choices, rather than something you are born with. Conversion therapy contributes to these misunderstandings and perspectives, which harm our LGBT+ community.

6.2.3 New Zealand is an inclusive society that promotes understanding and engagement with the LGBTQI+ community and actively seeks to improve their lives.

As we are currently, New Zealand is not a place that seeks to make the lives of the LGBT+ community better. Not while conversion therapy is still accepted and legal. We are not active enough in ensuring Aotearoa is an inclusive society. Banning the use of conversion therapy is a step in the right direction.

Conversion therapy does not work. It only purports to create more pain on the individuals who have to experience it.

Many of the young people in the Youth Council identify with the LGBT+ community. They have had to grow up in a society where it is still legal for them to be "converted" using out-of-date methods. They've grown up where discriminatory behavior is justified due to what we allow to be legal. We owe it to our LGBT+ whānau to abolish this practice!

No one should feel that they have to suppress who they are. Conversion therapy being an option enforces this on the LGBT+ community. We wholeheartedly support the action this bill takes in making Aotearoa a place for everyone.

Supporting this bill also allows us to achieve 6.2.1 and 6.2.3 of the youth action plan. This bill promotes inclusion and understanding and makes the lives of youth in Christchurch better off by allowing for less suppression of people's identity and allowing youth to live freer lives!

Thank you for allowing us to submit this bill.

Bryant McIntyre and Mia Sutherland  
*Christchurch Youth Council Executive Committee Members*