

Memorandum

To: Members of the House Human Services Committee
From: Kim Fountain, Pride Center of VT
Date: April 7, 2016
Re: S.132- Banning Conversion Therapy

Pride center of VT supports S132; however, we are requesting that the House Human Services Committee make a few changes to the bill. We propose that “gender identity” be added to the definition provisions of the bill, 18 V.S.A. § 8351.

The first finding in S.132 states, “In recognition that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is part of the natural spectrum of human identity and is not a disease, disorder, illness, deficiency, or shortcoming, the General Assembly finds: (1) Vermont has a compelling interest in protecting the physical and psychological well-being of children, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, and in protecting its children against exposure to serious harms.”

Given that, in 2007, the Legislature added “gender identity” to the anti-discrimination law, we recognize that the omission of “gender identity” in S.132 was an inadvertent oversight by the advocates in support of this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Proposed Amendments

Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 8351. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter:

(1) “Conversion therapy” means any practice by a mental health care provider that seeks to change an individual’s sexual orientation **or gender identity**, including efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions or to eliminate or reduce sexual or romantic attractions or feelings toward individuals of the same sex **or gender**.

(B) provide acceptance, support, and understanding of clients or the facilitation of clients’ coping, social support, and identity exploration and development, including sexual-orientation-neutral **or gender-identity-neutral** interventions to prevent or address unlawful conduct or unsafe sexual practices and that do not seek to change an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity.