

Community Call to Action: Conversion Practices Legislation

We, the undersigned, call on all Parliamentarians to affirm the inherent dignity and human rights of all Canadians, including those from the 2SLGBTQI+ community, to live free from discrimination, prejudice, and harm.

We call on the 44th session of the Canadian Parliament to take immediate action to prohibit all forms of conversion “therapy” practices and sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression change efforts (collectively “conversion practices”).

We call on all Parliamentarians to listen to and uplift the voices of survivors and 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians in developing comprehensive federal legislation to:

- Prohibit all forms of conversion practices,
- Develop accompanying policies and funding to support survivor healing, and,
- Create public education and awareness programs to prevent future conversion practices.

Conversion practices are not based in scientific evidence, are widely discredited by major medical and health associations, and are known to cause serious harm such as depression, anxiety, internalized shame and stigma, and suicide ideation and have been described as a form of torture by the *United Nations Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*.

We call on all Parliamentarians and political parties to consult broadly with survivors and the wider 2SLGBTQI+ community and enact the following:

- **Legislation that broadly defines and addresses all forms of “conversion practices”, rather than “conversion therapy”, that are used to change, suppress, or discourage a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.** Legislation must clearly define conversion practices to ensure it does not interfere with Canadians’ access to gender-affirming healthcare and inclusive counselling supports. The term “conversion practices” is becoming the global standard of reference for these known harms and abuses, and avoids the implication that these unscientific practices are therapeutic in any way. Conversion practices go by many different names such as “conversion therapy,” “reparative therapy,” “reorientation therapy,” “sexual orientation and gender identity and expression change efforts,” and other descriptors including discouraging same-sex attractions, repressing gender identity, and performing exorcisms.
- **Federal legislation must prohibit all forms of conversion practices regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sexual characteristics.** These practices are no less harmful to adults, trans, nonbinary and intersex Canadians. Legislation must apply to all ages and there can be no exemptions based on religious, or other grounds. All forms of conversion practices are based within anti-2SLGBTQI+ ideology and are inherently fraudulent, dangerous, and harmful.
- **Legislation must clearly state that so-called “consent to conversion practices” is not a valid legal defence.** Building on well-established precedents throughout the *Criminal Code*, any proposed legislation must include a no-consent provision to ensure Canadians are protected from all forms of conversion practices. It is impossible to provide consent to an inherently fraudulent and harmful set of practices that weaponize systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia and operate under a false premise against members of 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

- **Legislation should restrict the advertising of, profit from, and financing of conversion practices, whether in person or by electronic means.** Frequently, conversion practices are offered remotely via the Internet in an attempt to evade jurisdictional prohibitions. Increasingly, third parties are financially supporting conversion practices.
- **Legislation should make it a criminal offence to remove any person from Canada to undergo conversion practices.** Unfortunately, conversion practices are still legal and widely available in many countries around the world.
- **Legislation should specifically empower the Canada Revenue Agency to revoke charitable or corporate status, through a provisional process separate from any criminal proceedings, for entities shown to be practicing, advertising, selling or financing conversion practices, or otherwise violating Canada's conversion practices prohibition legislation.**
- **Legislation must also be accompanied by government funding to support grassroots efforts to foster survivor healing, education, and awareness across Canada within the proposed national *LGBTQ2+ Action Plan*.** Legislation should be paired with 'upstream' efforts to ensure that all Canadian youth have access to 2SLGBTQI+ affirming messages through schools and extracurricular settings and thereby reduce demand for conversion practices. These efforts may include expanded funding for community action initiatives (e.g., LGBTQ2 Community Capacity Fund, funded through *Women and Gender Equality Canada*) and national guidelines (e.g., the Canadian Guidelines on Sexual Health Education, funded by the *Public Health Agency of Canada*). The provision of adequate resources for survivors' mental health recovery is also essential. When developing supporting measures, every opportunity should be taken to consult with survivors and the wider 2SLGBTQI+ community to have the greatest possible impact.

- **The federal government should continue to consult with all provinces, territories, and municipalities to ensure optimal protection from conversion practices is achieved in Canada so that each government enacts complimenting legislation at their respective levels.** Every level of government has different powers and a responsibility to protect Canadians by prohibiting all forms of conversion practices.

Signatories

ACCKWA

ACT

Advocacy-Canada.lgbt

Affirm United

Affirming Connections

African Caribbean and Black Network - Waterloo Region

AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia

Anti-Heroine Media

Banff Pride Society

Barrie Pride

BC Humanist Association

Borderland Pride

Bridging With Support

Caledon Pride

Calgary Pride

Camrose Pride Society

Canadian Association of Social Workers

Canadian Labour Congress

Canadian LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce

Canadian Teachers' Federation

Canadian Union of Public Employees
Canmore Pride Society
Capital Pride
Capital Pride / Fierté dans la Capitale
Catholic Parents for DEI
Charlotte County Pride
Chroma: Pride, Inclusion, Equality, Inc.
Church Wellesley Counselling and Psychotherapy
Comité FrancoQueer de l'Ouest
Community-Based Research Centre
Compass Community Health
ConneQTNB
Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO)
ECLYPSE Youth Centre
Egale Canada
End of the Rainbow Foundation
ENSEMBLE Services Greater-Grand Moncton
Fierté Canada Pride
Fierté Fredericton Pride
Fondation Émergence
FrancoQueer
Gender and Social Justice Program, McMaster University
Guelph Resource Centre for Gender Empowerment and Diversity
Halifax Pride Society
Hamilton Trans Health Coalition
Hillhurst United Church
HIV Community Link Society
HIV/AIDS Regional Services (HARS)
IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada)

Innisfil Pride
JusticeTrans
Kincardine Pride Inc.
Labourers' International Union of North America, Local 3000 (LIUNA 3000)
LGBT Purge Fund
MacEwan Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity
MAX Ottawa
Moose Jaw Pride
National Association of Women and the Law | L'Association nationale
Femmes et Droit
Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre
No Conversion Canada - Waterloo Region
North Bay Pride
OAMHP - Ontario Association of Mental Health Professionals
OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants)
One Voice Chorus Society
OUTLaw (University of Ottawa)
Outloud North Bay
OUTniagara
Pflag Canada: Saint John
Pflag Canada: York Region
Platform
Positive Connections
Prairie Harm Reduction
Pride at Work Canada
Pride Toronto
Prince Edward County Counselling and Psychotherapy
Proud Pairs
Quadrangle NL
Queer Arabs Halifax
QueerTech

Rainbow Carleton
Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife
Rainbow Collective of Thunder Bay
Rainbow Railroad
Rainbow Resource Centre
Rainbow Veterans of Canada
Sexual Health Nova Scotia
Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre
Sheridan Student Union
SRHR Hubs
Stratford-Perth Pride
The Bridge - Brant
The Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health
The Enchanté Network
The Get REAL Movement
The Red Deer Queer Community Association
The Ten Oaks Project
The United Church of Canada - Church in Mission
Transgender Media Lab at Carleton University
TransParent Okanagan
UFCW Canada
Vancouver Pride Society
West Coast LEAF
White Rock Pride Society
Why We March
Wisdom2Action
Yukon Counselling and Psychotherapy