

Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

January 9, 2018

Honorable Marko Liias
309 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Senator Liias:

The Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (WAMFT) writes in strong supports your legislation, Senate Bill 5722 – Restricting the practice of conversation therapy.

As the professional association for systemic-oriented mental health professionals in our state, WAMFT supports prohibiting licensed health care providers from performing conversion therapy on individuals under the age of 18. This act should be considered unprofessional conduct if performed.

Youth who undergo conversion therapy, either voluntary or involuntary, are at an increased risk of experiencing mental health difficulties including, but not limited to depression, anxiety, substance abuse, unsafe sex practices, and suicide. The damage this procedure does to Washington youth is immeasurable.

WAMFT, on behalf of our 1,313 members, encourages the Washington State Legislature to pass SB 5722 for the health and safety of youth and adolescents. This bill is an opportunity for Washington to continue its reputation of being a strong advocate for children, LGBTQ youth, and families by prohibiting ineffective, harmful health care practices. We ask for speedy attention to this matter and look forward to standing beside you in this effort.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca A. Cobb', with a stylized, cursive script.

Rebecca A. Cobb, Ph.D., LMFT