

Mercer Island Reporter
2700 Richards Road Suite 201
Bellevue WA 98005

January 30, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in response to the article "State lawmakers hear a proposal to outlaw sexual conversion therapy" by Taylor McAvoy published on January 17, 2018. We were concerned to see a marriage and family therapist representing a position against Senate Bill 5722 restricting the practice of conversion therapy on individuals under the age of 18. While we respect everyone's right to their opinions as public citizens, we want to make sure that these are not seen as representing our field as a whole.

The Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (WAMFT) is in strong support of Senate Bill 5722. Youth who undergo conversion therapy, either voluntarily 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.

On behalf of our 1,313 members, we strongly support this 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.

Thank you,

Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
Legislative Committee