

Mayor Masters and Regina City Councillors,

Good Afternoon, Mayor Masters and City Councillors,
 My name is Gisela Stuhm and I am a
 Member of St James United Church Regina
 I am also a Member of the LGBTQ2SIA+ Community in Regina

First I want to commend each of you on the work that has been done to date by the Wellness Committee and by City Councillors and for the brave and courageous decision that was made on April 15 th, 2021 to have a draft bylaw prepared prohibiting Conversion Therapy practices. The draft is now ready and is before you and this is the opportunity to make needed and necessary amendments and to pass a Prohibited Businesses by law that will have teeth, that is clear, direct, unambiguous and that will **prevent** potential abuses and that will **protect** many vulnerable LGBTQ2S individuals in Regina
 The Prohibited Businesses by law must:

1. Protect **citizens of all ages**- children, youth, adolescents, adults and seniors.
2. Specifically Prohibit **behaviour modification, behaviour therapy and aversive Conditioning techniques** when the intent of their use is for the purpose of changing, repressing , suppressing or discouraging an individual's sexual orientation... etc
3. Specifically prohibit the **use of medication** when the intent of their use is for the purpose of changing, repressing , suppressing or discouraging an individual's sexual orientation... etc"
4. The Prohibited Business By Law needs to be applicable to practitioners if **money or a fee is charged or if the services are provided free of charge.**
5. The Prohibited Business By Law needs to be applicable to practitioners to clearly state consequences for **ongoing offences.**
6. The Prohibited Business By Law needs to have include **significant fines** incorporated into ByLaw. Significant fines themselves may be a deterrent .
7. **Vicarious Liability**

A city Prohibited Bylaw that allows for loopholes and leeway will be a feel good exercise only and none that is window dressing only.

Yes, the City of Regina will have a Prohibited Businesses Bylaw but it will not prevent abuses of practitioners and it will not protect vulnerable LGBTQ2S citizens. A Prohibited Practices Bylaw that looks good on the surface but potentially allows for these practices to continue unabated or that turns a blind eye to current practices would be a tragedy.

Identity is a fragile flower that can be readily stepped upon and easily crushed. Many denominations still view those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two spirit, queer, questioning as deviant and singular and therefore needing to be crushed and eradicated. This is a powerful message of “love the sinner, hate the sin” - a message that continues to be delivered to this day. The person is designated as sinful for being who they are but they are still loved despite their sinfulness. It is confusing to say the least. but I ask you how do you separate the essence of the person from the ones they love?

In conclusion I want to reiterate the position of the United Church of Canada in regards to the practice of Conversion Therapy:

“It is the belief of the United Church of Canada that our faith tradition affirms the dignity of all people, including people across the LGBTQ2SIA+ spectrum. We believe that LGBTQ2SIA+ and Two Spirit people are an expression of God's diverse creation and share with cisgender and heterosexual people an equal place in God's love.

We recognize that members of the LGBTQ2SIA+ communities continue to disproportionately experience marginalization, family estrangement, violence and exclusion in a predominantly heterosexual and gender binary culture. Knowing that our Christian Tradition has been used to cause great harm, we commit to making amends and to challenging these beliefs.”

Today I wish each of you an abundance of wisdom, clarity and discernment in the work that is at hand.

Gisela Stuhm

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