

April 27, 2020

To Saskatoon City Council,

First off, let me be clear – in no way do I support “aversion therapy” or “pray-away-the-gay.” Such approaches are harmful.

But the activists which fight for conversion therapy bans are talking about much much more. They are demanding that sexual attractions and feelings be accepted as a core and defining part of our identity. They assert that these attractions are immutable. They encourage us to self-identify according to how we feel we fit into gender norms. And if anyone questions if these should be the core and defining parts of our identity, they are slandered and mischaracterized as saying that some “lives are less valuable, less desirable, and less worth living.”

Every human person, regardless of thoughts, feelings, attractions or beliefs, are inherently and infinitely valuable.

Sexual fluidity – that is to say changes in sexual attractions – is common and documented.¹ To say that sexual attractions are unchangeable – immutable – is to erase the experiences of many who have found that their attractions indeed have changed over time. Would you prohibit them from offering counsel?

Some, have found it helpful to realize that their attractions, either homosexual or heterosexual, do not have to define them. Would you prohibit them from offering counsel?

Are you the arbiters of what kind of attractions people are allowed to find desirable for themselves? To tell someone that they are not allowed to desire to be in a committed relationship with the other biological parent of their children? They’re not allowed to pursue counselling to assist with that?

For someone whose gender identity feels at odds with their physical body – here are 3 options.

1. Just live with it - live with the feeling of being in dischord with yourself.

2. Seek to change the physical body so it conforms to the perceived gender identity. Medical transitioning includes cross-sex hormones at levels foreign to the body's chromosomal make-up, and long-term side effects, some known (i.e infertility and reduced bone density) and side effects still unknown because robust-long-term studies have not been done.

Medical transitioning also often includes major surgeries to physically alter the body to conform to gender stereotypes.

3. Seek to reconcile one's gender identity with one's current physical body.

Is city council saying that number 3 is not even allowed to be an option? City council would make it impossible to find a local therapist, counsellor or psychologist for those seeking help with this?

Furthermore, a ban against conversion therapy would create an inhospitable environment for proper psychological assessment prior to medical transitioning. A therapist who is merely trying to do due diligence and assess for other struggles sometimes related to gender dysphoria (such as autism,

1 Diamond, Lisa M. “Sexual Fluidity in Males and Females.” *Curr Sex Health Rep* (2016) 8:249–256 DOI 10.1007/s11930-016-0092-z. Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2016. a20ceadd-0fb7-4982-bbe2-099c8bc1e2ae.filesusr.com/ugd/ec16e9_6ad64a9a16214781868b6c11d60b7017.pdf

schizophrenia or disassociative identity disorder), before offering cross-sex hormones, could be accused of not affirming the patient's gender-identity. Fears of hefty fines, will unduly influence psychologists and counsellors, who now have to consider not just "what is best for my patient" but "what city hall will think of this". Medical transitioning is a major ordeal – would you allow no one to present alternatives?

A cautious approach is even more crucial for those under the age of majority. "Between 80 and 95 percent of children who say that they are transgender naturally come to accept their sex and to enjoy emotional health by late adolescence."² What options would you allow to be presented to them?

This is not theoretical – many of the stories of those who have detransitioned involve inadequate psychological evaluation. These people are left infertile, with scarred bodies, from the medical profession which was supposed to care for them.

Would you prohibit someone who detransitioned, from offering counsel, because it could be construed as "non-affirming"?

Are you as city council going to dictate to what kind of counselling other people are allowed to seek?

Sincerely,
Lisa Little

² Paul R McHugh, Paul Hruz, and Lawrence S. Mayer, Brief of *Amici Curiae* in Support of Petitioner, *Gloucester County School Board v. G.G.*, Supreme Court of the United States No.-16-273 (January 10, 2017), 12, http://americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/supreme_court_preview/briefs_2016_2017/16-273_amicus_pet_mchugh.authcheckdam.pdf