



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR
THERAPEUTIC & COUNSELLING CHOICE

Registered 2017 in the UK as a company (number 10910877)
70 Wimpole Street
London

W1G 8AX
+44 028 9756 3008

TESTIMONY OPPOSING MINNESOTA HF1256 THERAPY BAN BILL
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
FOR THERAPEUTIC AND COUNSELLING CHOICE
Laura Haynes, Ph.D., General Board Member and USA Country Representative
March 2, 2022

Honorable Chair Freiberg and Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Laura Haynes, psychologist and general board member representing the International Federation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (iftcc.org). We use evidenced based methods and well-established practices therapists use around the world and not aversive or coercive methods. We oppose this bill.

The American Psychological Association's *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology* says same sex attraction and incongruent gender identity¹ are not simply biologically determined or who someone biologically is. It says there are psychoanalytic causes² and childhood sexual abuse may be a cause for some people having same sex partners.³ Rigorous studies in the US⁴ and Finland⁵ have found that psychiatric conditions and suicidality often exist BEFORE onset of adolescent gender incongruence, therefore may be causes for it. Treating causes may reduce resulting sexual attraction or gender feelings. There are professional organizations worldwide that support the right to this therapy.⁶

For people who do significantly reduce or change same-sex attraction through therapy, psychological well-being strongly improves.⁷ ⁸ Even for people who do not change (they continue to identify as LGB), suicidality decreases. The leading study claiming harm, Blosnich 2020, used data collected for the Williams Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles.⁹ This study failed to compare lifetime suicidality rates before and after therapy. Studies that have been referred to today claiming proof of harm do not compare suicidality or psychological problems before and after change exploring therapy and admit their methods do not rightly allow them to conclude therapy causes harm. Harm-claiming studies regularly make this mistake, and professional organizations have based positions on them. When Sullins in 2022¹⁰ corrected this mistake using the Blosnich data set, the results turned upside down. Most of the lifetime suicidality was before change efforts. Suicidality rates for people who do not change markedly decreased after change-exploring counselling. Unsurprisingly, people who were suicidal went to counselling more than people who were not suicidal, and counselling decreased their suicidality.

Contrary to some claims, the United Nations has no binding treaty that mentions change-allowing therapy at all. Many UN nations oppose a therapy ban.

For adolescent gender dysphoria, change-exploring therapists follow Finland's first line government Recommendation to resolve gender dysphoria by resolving predisposing psychiatric disorders and not changing bodies.¹¹

HF1256 punishes providing FINLAND'S first line government recommended treatment for adolescent gender dysphoria. THIS IS A DISASTER. There is NOT professional consensus in support of HF1256. We urge you, vote NO.

Contact Dr. Laura Haynes: www.LauraHaynesPhD.com

For additional concise information:

TherapyEquality.org/HarmsOfTherapyBans (5 pp + endnotes; periodically updated)

References:

- ¹ Bockting, W. (2014). Chapter 24: Transgender Identity Development. In Tolman, D., & Diamond, L., Co-Editors-in-Chief (2014). *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology. Volume 1. Person Based Approaches*, p. 743. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association. <https://content.apa.org/PsycBOOKS/toc/14193>
- ² Rosario, M. & Schrimshaw, E. (2014). Chapter 18: Theories and etiologies of sexual orientation. In Tolman, D., & Diamond, L., Co-Editors-in-Chief (2014). *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology, Volume 1. Person Based Approaches*, p. 583. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4311512>
- ³ Mustanski, B., Kuper, L., and Geene, G. (2014). Chapter 19: Development of sexual orientation and identity. In Tolman, D., & Diamond, L., Co-Editors-in-Chief (2014). *APA Handbook of Sexuality and Psychology, Volume 1. Person Based Approaches*, pp. 609-610. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4311512>
- ⁴ Becerra-Culqui T.A., Liu Y., Nash R., Cromwell, L., Flanders, W.D., Getahun, D., Giammattei, S.V., Hunkeler, E.M., Lash, T.L., Millman, A., Quinn, V.P., Robinson, B., Roblin, D., Sandberg, D.E., Silverberg, M.J., Tangpricha, V., & Goodman, M. (2018). Mental health of transgender and gender nonconforming youth compared with their peers. *Pediatrics*, 141(5), e20173845. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-3845>
- ⁵ Kaltiala-Heino, R., Sumia, M., Työlajärvi, M., and Lindberg, N. (2015). Two years of gender identity service for minors: Overrepresentation of natal girls with severe problems in adolescent development. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 9, 4-6. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-015-0042-y>
- ⁶ Haynes, L. (2021). Medical, social science, and mental health organisations opposing bans on therapy for unwanted same-sex attraction or gender identity. <https://iftcc.org/resource/medical-and-mental-health-organisation-opposing-bans-on-therapy-for-unwanted-same-sex-attraction-or-gender-identity/>
- ⁷ Pela, C. & Sutton, P. (2021). Sexual attraction fluidity and well-being in men: A therapeutic outcome study. *Journal of Human Sexuality*, 12, 61-86. https://df6a7995-c8cd-4a49-bc0d-2ef92e2cf904.filesusr.com/ugd/ec16e9_08ac87b9a4a94711b6b72429723cda6a.pdf
- ⁸ Sullins, D., Rosik, C., and Santero, P. (April 27, 2021). Efficacy and risk of sexual orientation change efforts: a retrospective analysis of 125 exposed men, in review. <https://f1000research.com/articles/10-222/v2>
- ⁹ Blosnich, J.R., Henderson, E.R., Coulter, R.W.S., Boldbach, J.T., & Meyer, I.H. (2020). Sexual orientation change efforts, adverse childhood experiences, and suicide ideation and attempt among sexual minority adults, United States, 2016-2018. *American Journal of Public Health Surveillance*, 110(7), 1024-1030. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32437277/>
- ¹⁰ Sullins, D. (2021). Sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) reduce suicide: Correcting a false research narrative, in review. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3729353>
See also Sullins, D. (2022). Absence of behavioral harm following non-efficacious sexual orientation change efforts: A retrospective study of United States sexual minority adults, 2016-2018. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, article 823647. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.823647/full>
Sullins 2021 and 2022 are replication studies of Blosnich et al., 2020 using the same data set.
- ¹¹ Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland (PALKO/COHERE Finland) (2020). Recommendation of the Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland (PALKO/COHERE Finland): Medical Treatment Methods for Dysphoria Related to Gender Variance in Minors. <https://palveluvalikoima.fi/en/recommendations#genderidentity> . UNOFFICIAL English translation: https://segm.org/sites/default/files/Finnish_Guidelines_2020_Minors_Unofficial%20Translation.pdf