Oppose Prohibited Business Bylaw -- Unlawful, Dangerous, and Unnecessary

Testimony of Dr. Andre Van Mol, MD

1. Everyone should be free to find therapy and support to help them achieve their desired goals and outcomes, including those who want to explore all options regarding feelings of same-sex attraction and gender incongruence/anxiety. Voicesof-change.org, ChangedMovement.com, exodusglobalalliance.org/firstpersonc7.php, SexChangeRegret.com are among groups providing testimonials of people who have changed undesired sexual attraction or gender incongruence through professional counseling.

2. Therapy bans deprive adults and children of the freedom to set their own counseling goals and objectives, and it will likely cause some children and adults to commit suicide by forbidding therapy for underlying issues. The American Psychological Association’s Handbook on Sexuality and Psychology1 and numerous studies acknowledge that childhood sexual abuse can cause unwanted homosexuality in some individuals.2-iii The overwhelming majority of people with gender dysphoria have additional mental health conditions, neuro-developmental disabilities like autism spectrum, adverse childhood events, and family issues that pre-date or coincide with their gender incongruence.4 v vi vii The APA Handbook on Sexuality and Psychology specifically warns against a rush affirm or gender transition because it risks neglecting underlying psychological issues.viii Endocrine Society guidelines state that psychological intervention is all that is needed in some forms of gender dysphoria.ix If this bylaw passes, children and adults will be unable to heal these wounds, be legislated into a false identity, and can be left suicidal and without hope as a result.

3. Professional Psychological Associations state that homosexuality is changeable. The 2014 APA Handbook states that sexual orientation may change over a person’s lifetime especially during adolescence.x The APA’s Dr. Lisa Diamond concluded “...arguments based on the immutability of sexual orientation are unscientific, given what we now know...”xi The UK’s Royal College of Psychiatrists declared in 2014: "sexual orientation is determined by a combination of biological and postnatal environmental factors"... "[it] is not the case that sexual orientation is immutable or might not vary to some extent in a person’s life..." Numerous studies concur.xii xiii xiv xv

4. Trans-identification/gender anxiety has an overwhelming probability of desistance, resolving on its own in 75-95% by adulthood.xvi xvii xviii xix xx The “watchful waiting” model of treatment -- comprehensive mental health evaluation and counseling, including of the family -- is the international standard of care for minors with gender incongruence/anxiety xvi xxii xxiii and counseling bans are not.

5. Twenty states have voted down similar bans because they are needless.
Complaints of harmful practice and clinician malefiance are addressed by appointed licensed mental health professionals on provincial licensing board. These licensing boards are responsible for documenting and addressing alleged harm. Where are the verified, documented harms and the penalized change-allowing licensed therapists?

6. There is no evidence of harm from sexual orientation change therapy provided by licensed professionals. Change-allowing counseling is patient-initiated, patient-directed talk therapy led by licensed therapists working with willing and motivated people. Most harm claims have not involved trained therapists and generally are unsubstantiated. The popularly misquoted American Psychological Association’s Gay and Lesbian Task Force’s 2009 report stated specifically that modern change allowing therapy “since 1978” was “nonaversive,” meaning free of painful or shame infliction (p.43), and that research meeting scientific standards did not allow attributing harm or inefficacy to change-allowing therapy (pp. 43,82).

7. As constitutional law catches up to therapy bans, they are falling. The city of Tampa, Florida lost in court in Vazzo v Tampa. New York City withdrew its therapy ban when challenged. Calgary’s Prohibited Business Bylaw would follow.

Most respectfully,
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8 APA Handbook on Sexuality and Psychology, V.1, Bockting, W. Chapter 24: Transgender Identity Development, p. 750.


xii Diamond, LM; Rosky, CJ; “Scrutinizing Immutability: Research on Sexual Orientation and U.S. Legal Advocacy for Sexual Minorities.” Annals of Sex Research. 00(00), 1-29, 2016.


xx "Do Trans- kids stay trans- when they grow up?" Sexologytoday.org, 11 Jan. 2016.


Essential Psychopathology and Its Treatment, Third Ed, Maxmen, War, and Kilgus (W.W. Norton & Co.).


