

HOUSE BILL 211

No young person should ever be shamed by a mental health professional into thinking that who they are is wrong based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Ending conversion therapy is not a partisan issue, and nearly half of the laws on the books protecting LGBTQ youth from these harmful practices were signed by GOP governors, including states like New Mexico, New Hampshire, and Nevada.



TALKING POINTS

- **What is conversion therapy?** A pseudoscientific practice, sometimes referred to as “reparative therapy,” is any of several dangerous and discredited practices aimed at changing an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - The UCLA Williams Institute estimates approximately 698,000 LGBTQ adults in the U.S. have received conversion therapy at some point in their lives, including about 350,000 who received it as adolescents. They predict 20,000 LGBTQ youth currently ages 13 to 17 will undergo conversion therapy from a licensed healthcare professional before turning 18; another 57,000 youth will receive the treatment from a religious or spiritual advisor.
 - **What about in Kentucky?** Unfortunately, we don't have a set figure because this is not an area where data is being collected. However, we do know that these practices are happening in Kentucky, we just don't know to what extent. Even if just one person were being harmed by these practices, it is enough to call for action.
- **Why are Conversion Therapy Practices harmful?** Conversion therapists use a variety of shaming, emotionally traumatic or physically painful stimuli to make their victims associate those stimuli with their LGBTQ identities. This can lead to depression, decreased self-esteem, substance abuse, and even suicidal ideation.
 - These dangerous and discredited practices are based on the false claim that being LGBTQ is a mental illness that needs to be cured. This view has **NO scientific basis**.
 - **The nation’s leading mental health associations have issued position statements warning about the dangers of these practices.** Including: the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Academy of 14 Pediatrics, and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy .
 - As well as the Kentucky medical association, Kentucky psychological association, and Kentucky mental health coalition
 - The United Nations Committee Against Torture and Human Rights Commission have expressed serious concern over the continued use of conversion therapy in the United States.

What is **HB 211**?

This bill will prevent licensed mental health providers in Kentucky from performing conversion therapy with a patient under 18 years of age or an adult who has a court-appointed guardian. The bill will curb harmful practices known to produce lifelong damage to those who are subjected to them and help ensure the health and safety of LGBTQ youth.

⇒ Kentucky youth and families have a right to expect that a therapist practicing under a license from the state will not put them at risk of severe harm, including depression, substance abuse, and even suicidal ideation.

If successful, Kentucky would be the 15th state to pass legislation limiting the practice. Passage of this legislation will help protect youth from coercion and prevent harms from conversion therapy before they occur.