



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services  
**An Act to Prohibit the Provision of Conversion Therapy to Minors by Certain Licensed Professionals**  
April 10, 2019

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and Members of the Committee:

I am Jane Field, Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches and I am testifying on behalf of our seven member-denominations who represent 437 local congregations and 55,000 members across the state, to urge you to support LD 1025.

The unanimous vote of the Methodist, Congregational, Episcopal, Lutheran, Unitarian Universalist, Quaker, and Presbyterian representatives to the Council to support passage of LD 1025 was based on a set of shared beliefs:

- Our LGBTQ brothers and sisters are beloved children of God, created in the divine image; among us on the Council's Board of Directors are three members of the LGBTQ community and several parents of LGBTQ sons and daughters; in the pulpits and pews of our 437 congregations are cherished colleagues and parishioners who are LGBTQ
- Sexual orientation and gender identity are a gift from God—not a condition that needs treatment, not a choice that needs conversion, not something broken that needs repair, not a sin that needs forgiveness
- Some of the most vulnerable in God's creation are LGBTQ children and youth
- Consigning children and teens to therapy intended to "convert" them from the way in which God created them causes shame and lowered self-esteem, significantly increasing the risk of depression, drug use, anxiety, homelessness and suicide
- Subjecting a child to conversion therapy is not a matter of the parents' religious liberty; it is a matter of religious abuse and it is a violation of the child's religious liberty
- Conversion therapy is psychological and spiritual malpractice and amounts to torture.

Our representatives' decision was also informed by careful research that indicated conversion therapy has been completely discredited by every major medical and psychological organization in the United States, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the National Association of Social Workers, and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.

For these reasons, the Maine Council of Churches urges you to support passage of LD 1025.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Field".