

January 21, 2021

Dear Mr. Lobb,

I am writing to express my deep concern about Bill C-6 and its proposed changes to the criminal code to ban conversion therapy.

All Canadians should be concerned for the rights and freedoms of every citizen and should certainly stand unified to prevent anyone from being subjected to coercive, harmful, and involuntary efforts to change sexual orientation or gender identity. However, as presently worded, the bill's definition of "*conversion therapy*" presents a grave threat to the rights and freedoms of parents, health care providers, and many people of faith.

Bill C-6 defines conversion therapy as:

*A practice, treatment or service designed to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual or gender identity to cisgender, or to repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour.*

In addition, the Justice Committee's December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 report to the House of Commons recommended adding "*gender expression*" to the proposed definition, making it even more broad-ranging and unclear.

The concerning impact of the ambiguous language within the bill have not gone unnoticed throughout the legislative process.

When asked for clarifications about the legislation's reach, Justice Minister Lametti felt the need to assure Canadians that the bill is not meant to penalize "***open-ended and exploratory***" conversations (emphasis added). Unfortunately, he did not clarify what kinds of conversations this would include.

The Justice Department itself saw need to clarify and assure Canadians by stating on their website that the legislation would not criminalize

***private conversations in which personal views on sexual orientation, sexual feelings or gender identity are expressed such as where teachers, school counsellors, pastoral counsellors, faith leaders, doctors, mental health professionals, friends or family members provide support to persons struggling with their sexual orientation, sexual feelings, or gender identity (emphasis added).***

Unfortunately, this assuring language is not included in the legislation itself.

In response to the implications of the Justice Committee's decision to add "*gender expression*" to the bill's definition, Bloc Quebecois MP Rheal Fortin warned:

*The example that I have in mind is an 8-year-old boy that one morning decides before going to school that today he will wear a dress. Maybe the mother will say "Sure," maybe she'll say "No." But if we keep this definition, [and she says] "No, I don't want you to wear a dress; you wear pants today," it will be a criminal act. It will be an offense. I have a problem with that.*

Unfortunately, no changes were made to allay Mr. Fortin's concern.

Mr. Lobb. The fact that even those in government and the Department of Justice see the need to clarify what this bill will and will not criminalize is reason for **great concern**. The fact that none of the language they used to clarify the intended exceptions to the bill (such as *open-ended, exploratory, or private conversation, and personal views*) appear anywhere in the legislation. This fact alone carries some dire implications.

As it stands, the present wording of Bill C-6 would make the following a criminal act:

- A psychiatrist or psychologist who, in order to address pre-existing medical or mental health conditions first, counsels a patient to reconsider a decision to pursue irreversible surgical gender transition treatment
- As MP Fortin pointed out, a mother's insistence that her son wear pants to school instead of a dress
- A parent teaching and encouraging their teen to practice sexual abstinence or saving sex for marriage
- Parents teaching and promoting religiously based sexual ethics to their children in their own home
- A pastor, rabbi or imam teaching and promoting the sexual ethics of their religious tradition to their congregation
- A doctor or health care provider discouraging a minor from undertaking life-altering and permanent hormonal treatments and surgery before they're old enough to understand the implications

Mr. Lobb, as I mentioned before, I believe that Canada should be a country where no person is forced against their will to undergo coercive treatments or procedures of any kind. We must all stand united to value and protect every citizen, especially the vulnerable such as children.

As presently written, however, this legislation clearly upholds the rights of some Canadians by threatening the rights of others. Canada needs to remain a free country where its citizens may order their sexual lives in accordance with their religious conscience, faith identity, and personal convictions. As it stands, Bill C-6 threatens those freedoms.

As my member of Parliament, I am asking you to vote to oppose the Justice Committee's proposed amendments to Bill C-6, which add the wording of "gender expression" to the definition of conversion therapy. I would also ask that to the extent you are able, you encourage your fellow MPs to carefully re-consider the very real concerns that Bill C-6 in its present form poses to the rights and freedoms of all Canadians.

Mr. Lobb, I want to respectfully thank you for your service as our elected representative in Ottawa.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned above the name Scott Stein.

Scott Stein

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