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Press Release



For Immediate Release

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Governor Hassan Urges New Hampshire State Senate to Pass Bill Banning "Conversion Therapy"

CONCORD – As part of her efforts to continue New Hampshire's longstanding tradition of inclusion and ensuring that the rights of all citizens are protected, Governor Maggie Hassan today sent a letter to Senate President Chuck Morse and members of the Senate urging support for House Bill 1661, relative to conversion therapy seeking to change a person's sexual orientation.

"I am incredibly proud of New Hampshire's history of continually making progress to fully include and protect the rights of all of our citizens," Governor Hassan wrote. "The dangerous practice of conversion therapy, also known as "reparative therapy" has been extensively studied, opposed, and discredited by a wide-range of American medical and mental health organizations."

House Bill 1661 would ban "conversion therapy" for individuals under 18 years old. The American Psychiatric Association has found that there are many potential risks of reparative therapy, including depressing anxiety and self-destructive behavior.

"LGBT youth are already at an increased risk for suicide, depression, and harmful behaviors, and studies have made clear that conversion therapy could potentially increase those risks," Governor Hassan wrote. "Passing this legislation will send an important message to our young people that they can be who they are, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and that they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect."

The full text of the Governor's letter is below:

May 11, 2016

Senate President Chuck Morse
State House, Room 302
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Senate President Morse and honorable members of the Senate:

I am incredibly proud of New Hampshire's history of continually making progress to fully include and protect the rights of all of our citizens. Recently, the House of Representatives passed important legislation to ban so-called "conversion therapy" for those under 18 years old and to end the harmful, unnecessary and scientifically unsound practice of seeking to change a minor's sexual orientation or gender identity. I urge the Senate to pass HB 1661 without changes and without delay.

The dangerous practice of conversion therapy, also known as "reparative therapy" has been extensively studied, opposed, and discredited by a wide-range of American medical and mental health organizations. The American Psychiatric Association has concluded that "The potential risks of reparative therapy are great, including depression, anxiety and self-destructive behavior..." LGBT youth are already at an increased risk for suicide, depression, and harmful behaviors, and studies have made clear that conversion therapy could potentially increase those risks.

It is critical the Senate passes the legislation that has already passed the House of Representatives. I oppose proposals in the Senate that would create a new legislative study, as the evidence from medical and mental

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health experts is already clear. A new legislative study would only further advance the false premise that LGBT individuals need to be cured, or that their sexual orientation or gender identity is somehow a choice.

It is time that we take an important step forward, and end this harmful practice in New Hampshire. Passing this legislation will send an important message to our young people that they can be who they are, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and that they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

With every good wish,

Margaret Wood Hassan
Governor

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