

July 30, 2021

Dear Mayor Amy Goodwin and members of City Council,

We are a collection of faith leaders from across the Kanawha Valley that have joined together to write to you in support of Councilwoman Caitlin Cook's bill to ban conversion therapy on minors.

As faith leaders, we believe we must do everything in our power to make sure that West Virginia is a safe place to live, work, and raise a family for all people, including members of the LGBTQ community. Unfortunately, the dangerous and discredited practice of conversion therapy is still legally allowed to flourish in our state.

We recognize the harm caused to our community when our community continues to allow conversion therapy to continue unchecked. Children who are subjected to the pseudoscientific practice of conversion therapy are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and even attempt suicide. We feel it is important for us, as representatives of the Kanawha Valley's faith community, to speak up and stand in solidarity with members of the LGBTQ community.

The bill will not harm our ability to continue serving our congregations and churches without interference from the government. We strongly support this proposal, and we encourage members of council to vote in favor of it.

Yours,

Rev. Ronald English

Rev. Amy Parker

Rabbi Victor Urecki

Rev. Claire Butler

Rev. Cindy Briggs-Biondi

Rev. Michelle Boomgaard

Rev. Jim Lewis

Rabbi Joe Blair