

Conversion Therapy

RANDY BOISSONNAULT · FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2018

Conversion therapy is a heinous and inhumane practice with no basis in science. My government colleagues and I are deeply concerned with this issue.

My team at the LGBTQ2 Secretariat and I have consulted with the Department of Justice. They have identified current federal laws that may apply to practices aimed at changing the sexual orientation or gender identity of a person.

Depending on the circumstances of a particular case, Criminal Code offences such as: kidnapping (subsection 279(1)), forcible confinement (subsection 279(2)) and assault (sections 266 to 268) may apply where a person is forcibly compelled to undergo conversion therapy.

The fraud offence (section 380) may apply where fees are charged for conversion therapy services, since the practice has been discredited by medical and psychiatric associations.

The offence prohibiting the willful promotion of hatred against an identifiable group (subsection 319(2)) may apply if the offering of conversion therapy services involves wilfully promoting hatred against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

If you believe that a minor may be in harm, I strongly encourage you to contact your local child protection services or law enforcement authorities.

Lastly, if you are aware of an organization with designated a charitable registration status that is practicing conversion therapy, I strongly encourage you to lodge a complaint with the Canada Revenue Agency. For information on how to report a registered charity, please visit the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/contact-charities-directorate.html>

Municipalities and provinces share in the responsibility to prevent acts of conversion therapy from taking place. If your community or province has not yet banned conversion

therapy, push them to do more. My team and I will continue to work every day to see what more the federal government can do to address this issue.

We have to work together to stamp out this odious practice. Your sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are yours and yours alone, nobody should change that.