



Senator Melissa Wicklund, Chair  
Health and Human Services  
February 8, 2023

Chair Wicklund and Health and Human Services Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN) and the MN Society for Clinical Social Work (Clinical Society), we are writing in support of Senate File 23, a bill prohibiting the practice of conversion therapy with children or vulnerable adults.

Clinical social workers (LICSW) make up the largest group of mental health providers in Minnesota. NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing nearly 2000 social workers, and the Clinical Society is a professional group who advance the practice of clinical social work in Minnesota. Collectively, our organizations offer experience and expertise in mental health practice. We join other mental health professionals including psychologists, psychiatrists and licensed clinical counselors, in saying definitively that attempts to change sexual orientation is not only ineffective, it is dangerous and harmful to individuals. It has no place in mental health practice.

At its core, social workers value the dignity and worth of individuals. In contrast, conversion therapy sends the message that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer individuals are flawed who need to alter their true selves in order to join their communities. Furthermore, it inaccurately suggests that sexual orientation is a mental illness. This message is unacceptable for any Minnesotan to hear, and it is particularly irresponsible to impose it upon developing adolescents or other vulnerable people. Conversion therapy is irresponsible and unethical social work practice.

It is time to prohibit conversion therapy in law. Please support SF23. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Karen E. Goodenough in black ink.

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW  
Executive Director  
NASW-MN

Handwritten signature of James Stoltz in black ink.

James Stoltz, LICSW, LADC  
Legislative Committee  
Clinical Society

Handwritten signature of Jennifer Arneson in black ink.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW  
Legislative Consultant  
NASW-MN  
Clinical Society