



March 2026

To: House Judiciary Committee

RE: AAUW SUPPORTS HB26-1322 Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors

Dear Committee Members,

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. More than 700 community leaders are members of AAUW branches around Colorado.

One of our priorities is to pursue policies that advance full access to civil rights for a diverse society. Current law already prohibits state-licensed medical and mental health care providers (such as counselors, psychologists, and social workers) from engaging in conversion therapy with anyone under the age of 18. HB1322 establishes a new legal pathway for individuals harmed by conversion therapy to file civil lawsuits for damages with no statute of limitations. This bill recognizes the delayed psychological damage from conversion therapy, and will give survivors adequate time to seek legal remedies for the harms they have suffered.

For these reasons, AAUW of Colorado strongly supports House Bill 1322 and requests your YES vote in committee and as the bill moves forward in the legislative process.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Su" and last name "Ryden" clearly legible.

Hon. Su Ryden
AAUW Colorado Advocacy-Director

16699 E. Kentucky Ave.
Aurora, CO 80017
303.898.5797
suryden25@gmail.com

American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

House Judiciary

03/25/2026 01:30 PM

HB26-1322 Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Stephen McKenna Against Grandparents4Kids	This bill has no statute of limitations, allows for economic and punitive damages, and makes it easier for a plaintiff to prove in court that conversion therapy (refusing to affirm gender confusion) directly caused their injury or harm. All to restrict the right of a therapist to speak freely with and counsel a patient according to their conscience. The bill would create an unconstitutional restriction on therapists' free speech rights to push a dangerous ideology and enrich trial lawyers. Please VOTE NO.
Susan Cullison Against themselves	<p>We all know that "conversion therapy" is happening when we affirm and convert children to believe that somehow their "gender" is different from their sexed body. This is based on nothing but a harmful belief. The psychological community needs to be held to account. Supporting the OPPOSITE of this (which this bill does) which is a therapist telling them something IS WRONG with their body is actually what is causing the most harm. I cannot believe our legislature is actually considering helping someone to be at peace with their biological reality is somehow a harmful thing? We all know this is about "gender identity" bundled with sexual orientation so as to hide the real intent. The truth is that the gender identity activists are actually converting children who would otherwise just grow up to be gay. These beliefs are actually hurting the gay community.</p> <p>Stop supporting gay conversation therapy under the guise of "conversion therapy protections."</p>

	<p>The public is seeing through this.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Constituent, Susan Cullison</p>
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August Tousignant-Stanton, LCSW, LMFT, Owner

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is August Tousignant-Stanton (they/them), and I live in Denver, Colorado. I am a queer therapist and the owner of Affirming Psychotherapy LLC. I also serve as the Program Director at Denver Family Institute and as the Project Lead for the Systemic Provider Training for Queer Youth Clients, a program that trains clinicians to work competently and ethically with queer youth and their families. I am the developer of the Queer Adjusted Systemic Lens, a family therapy model that centers the lived experiences of queer individuals. I am also a parent. I am writing to express my strong support for HB26-1322, Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors.

Why This Bill Matters to Me

As a mental health provider specializing in work with queer youth, particularly trans youth, I have seen firsthand the harm caused by conversion therapy. Queer individuals already face elevated risks, including suicide attempts, substance use, and family rejection. Conversion therapy significantly exacerbates these risks, compounding harm rather than alleviating it.

Why Our Community Needs This Bill

As clinicians, we are ethically and legally accountable for the care we provide. It follows that mental health professionals must also be held accountable for the harm they cause when engaging in conversion therapy. There are several reasons this accountability is essential:

1. First, conversion therapy is an unethical practice. A robust body of research has consistently demonstrated the significant psychological harm it causes.
2. Second, conversion therapy is already illegal in Colorado. When clinicians engage in prohibited practices, there must be meaningful consequences and accountability.
3. Third, and critically, survivors need recognition that what happened to them was wrong. The harm of conversion therapy is not limited to the intervention itself; it often becomes internalized. Clients may come to believe that an innate and unchangeable part of who they are is defective or unacceptable. Many survivors do not fully understand the extent of this harm until years later. Providing a pathway for civil action sends a clear and necessary message: this should never have happened, and their identities are valid.

What I Am Asking You To Do

I urge you to vote YES on HB26-1322. This bill is about ensuring accountability within the mental health profession and supporting survivors in their pursuit of justice and healing.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to the people of Colorado.

Sincerely,

August Tousignant-Stanton, LCSW, LMFT

They/them

Denver, CO

Owner and Therapist, Affirming Psychotherapy LLC

Program Director, Denver Family Institute

Program Lead, the Systemic Provider Training for Queer Youth Clients

Creator of the Queer Adjusted Systemic Lens

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Submitted by: Marcella Schieffelin

Location: Jefferson County, Colorado

Date: March 25, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT**

Bill: HB26-1322, Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors

Committee: **House Judiciary**

Introduction

My name is Marcella Schieffelin. I am a Jefferson County resident and the founder of Justice Care, a Colorado-based civil and human rights advocacy platform. I hold a Graduate LEND Fellowship through CU Anschutz / JFK Partners UCEDD and have served as Co-Chair of the Planning and Grants Committee of the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council. I submit this testimony as a disability rights advocate and policy strategist with lived experience as a caregiving youth and family caregiver.

I submit this testimony in support of HB26-1322, the Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors Act. This bill is necessary, it is grounded in evidence, and its legal foundation is sound. Each objection raised against it collapses under scrutiny.

The Bill's Title Is Not Incidental. It Is the Argument.

Opponents of HB26-1322 have characterized it as retaliation: an unconstitutional civil liability regime designed to punish protected speech. That characterization requires ignoring the word in the bill's own title.

Survivors. That word is not rhetorical. It is a legal and clinical descriptor that is accurate. There are documented survivors. There is documented evidence of harm. Decades of peer-reviewed research, survivor testimony, and clinical case records establish that conversion therapy does not change sexual orientation or gender identity. What it changes is the mental health trajectory of the people subjected to it.

Elevated rates of depression, anxiety, suicidality, and lasting psychological injury are not contested findings in the clinical literature. They are the evidentiary basis for consensus statements from the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as from every major mental health licensing body in the United States.

Civil liability for documented harm is the foundation of tort law. HB26-1322 does not invent a new principle. It applies an existing one. When a licensed professional causes measurable injury through conduct that falls below the standard of care, the person harmed has recourse. The question opponents do not answer is this: if the harm is

documented, if the survivors are real, and if the conduct causing that harm is deliberate, on what basis does a licensed practitioner claim immunity from civil accountability?

This Is a Licensing Issue, Not a First Amendment Issue.

The First Amendment objection to this bill misunderstands what a professional license is.

A license is a state-granted privilege, issued in exchange for agreement to practice within established professional standards. When a therapist accepts a license from the Colorado State Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, they are not simply receiving permission to speak. They are agreeing to abide by the rules governing what they may do under that credential.

We apply this logic without controversy in every other licensed profession. A licensed physician cannot prescribe unapproved treatments and invoke the First Amendment when the medical board investigates. The First Amendment governs what the government may prohibit a private citizen from saying. It does not immunize licensed professionals from the standards of the profession they voluntarily joined.

If a therapist's position is that their work is protected speech rather than professional practice, then they have argued themselves out of their own clinical authority. You cannot simultaneously claim the legitimacy of a therapeutic relationship and the immunity of a private citizen. Those are incompatible positions. Civil liability for professional harm is not a speech restriction. It is a consequence.

The Asymmetry Argument Tracks the Evidence, Not Ideology.

Some opponents argue that HB26-1322 is asymmetric, shielding gender-affirming care while exposing other therapeutic approaches to liability. This argument has a direct answer.

The asymmetry, where it exists, tracks the evidence. Practices with documented harm records carry greater liability exposure in every professional context. A surgeon who performs a procedure with a known harm profile and inadequate informed consent faces greater liability than one who performs a procedure with an established safety record, not because of ideology, but because the evidence base differs.

The same framework that holds a psychologist liable for fast-tracking an irreversible intervention without proper assessment and informed consent is the framework being applied here. The standard is consistent. Practitioners who bypass professional standards of care, in any direction, bear responsibility for the harm.

This Legislation Is Part of a Coordinated National Campaign to Roll Back LGBTQ Protections.

The Colorado legislature is not acting in isolation. It is responding to a documented, multi-decade litigation and legislative campaign whose scale the committee should understand.

The legal challenge to Colorado's original conversion therapy ban was brought by the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a conservative Christian litigation organization that reported revenue of roughly \$110 million in 2023 and over 5,000 allied attorneys globally. The case, *Chiles v. Salazar*, was a pre-enforcement challenge brought three years after the ban passed. No complaint had ever been filed against the plaintiff. ADF went looking for a plaintiff and built a case.

ADF is a formal supporter of Project 2025, the federal transition blueprint that explicitly calls for gutting LGBTQ protections across the federal government. The scale of ADF's legislative and litigation output tells the story:

- In 2022 alone, ADF authored at least 130 bills in 34 states, more than 30 of which passed into law.
- In 2023, at least 510 anti-LGBTQ bills were introduced across more than 40 states, nearly three times the 2022 volume.
- In 2025, 867 bills targeting transgender people were introduced across the United States.

HB26-1322 is Colorado's measured, evidence-based response to that campaign. It does not restrict speech. It provides civil recourse to survivors of documented harm. That is not ideological overreach. That is the proper function of a state legislature responding to the needs of its residents.

What Informed Consent Would Require Regardless.

Even setting aside the civil liability framework, basic informed consent requirements, already mandatory in every clinical context, would demand that any therapist practicing conversion therapy disclose:

- The specific ideological or religious framework guiding the practice
- The fact that this approach is not recognized as evidence-based by the practitioner's own licensing body
- The documented risks in the clinical literature

That is not silencing a therapist. It is the same transparency required of every other licensed professional making claims about their services. HB26-1322 goes further, appropriately, by providing recourse when that standard of care is violated and harm results.

Conclusion

HB26-1322 is grounded in decades of clinical evidence. It applies established tort principles to a context where documented harm has gone unaddressed. It is constitutionally sound. And its title names the people it was written for.

I urge the committee to advance HB26-1322.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcella Schieffelin

Founder, Justice Care

Jefferson County, Colorado

Graduate LEND Fellow, CU Anschutz / JFK Partners UCEDD

Justice Care | Rights without enforcement are just promises.

Dear Members of the HB26-1322 Committee,

My name is Jennifer Shivey MA, LPC, RPT-S, ACS. I use she/her pronouns, and I live in Denver. I'm a Licensed Professional Counselor, as well as a parent of a queer youth and I'm writing to express my strong support for HB26-1322 – Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors. My counseling practice has been focused on supporting transgender and gender expansive use for many years. This bill is extremely important to me, both as a mental health professional and as a parent. I have seen firsthand the damage caused to individuals by conversion therapy, especially our youth. Youth look to the adults in their lives to guide and support them. Many adults will see conversion therapy as aligned with their religious beliefs, not completely understanding that it's not based on religion. It is not a theoretical orientation, there are no specific techniques to follow; it's wildly unregulated and left up to the therapist to determine what conversion therapy means to them. This is dangerous and unethical.

I know an individual whose parents have had a priest perform an exorcism to pray away the demon(s) causing their sexual deviation. I know another was sent to a camp to "deal with" their sexual orientation. Many individuals I have worked with have been counseled by organizations that were recommended by their parents' churches, without knowing exactly would be happening in those programs. This is difficult for children and adolescents because their families need to be their supportive base. If they don't have that we need to be able to look for other support in the community.

I have been practicing for 15+ years in the community. I have a wide network of other mental health professionals, higher education instructors, supervisees and counseling students. I do not know a single one that is in support of bringing conversion therapy back. Quite the opposite. This is not something the mental health community wants. Harm that has been done needs to be recognized as the amount of counseling to repair this harm is extensive.

While Colorado has already outlawed licensed mental health providers from practicing conversion therapy, the damage has already been done to many who have undergone conversion therapy before this rule. The current law also does not prevent pastoral counseling from providing conversion therapy. A key component to the standards of ethics for the American Counseling Association, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and every other discipline is "do no harm." The harm is still being done. We cannot have harm sanctioned in the State of Colorado.

Many survivors of conversion therapy do not realize that they have been harmed until later in life. No one should be denied justice for not speaking up sooner.

I urge you to vote YES on HB26-1322. This bill is about holding licensed mental health providers accountable and supporting conversion therapy survivors in their pursuit of justice.

Thank you for your time, service, and commitment to the people of Colorado.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Shivey MA, LPC, RPT-S, ACS
she/her
Denver 80221

Dear Legislators,

My name is Allison Pickles, I use she/her pronouns, and I live in Lakewood, CO. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor with my own practice, where I see Coloradans who are recovering from trauma and are often in the queer community just like me. I am writing this testimony to support HB26-1322- *Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors* because every human, every Coloradan, deserves justice and space to heal, especially when they are harmed by someone in a helping profession such as mine.

Conversion “therapy” is a harmful and abusive practice with profound deleterious effects on folks in the LGBTQIA+ community. This bill is a step to remedy the pain caused by mental health providers who harmed their clients with this so-called treatment. It will hold them accountable for their unethical and scarring attempts to manipulate clients into self-hatred, when the entire purpose of therapy is to learn self-love. Mental health providers who wielded this approach not only harmed help-seeking people, but pushed their own hate-driven agendas onto such folks. My job, and that of everyone licensed to practice in Colorado, is to help our clients heal and change in the way *they* want to do so, without a single agenda of our own. Hate has no place in a therapy office.

Colorado has made it illegal to force this so-called therapy onto clients, but the wounds of previously endured treatment are present in Coloradans who were subject to such before the law changed. As is often the case with any trauma, many do not realize how wrong or deeply painful their experience was until years later, and no one should be punished for that delay. Everyone deserves justice no matter how long it has been since the injustice took place.

I urge you to vote yes on *Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors* to hold licensed mental health providers accountable and support conversion abuse survivors in their pursuit of justice and healing.

Thank you for your time, service, and commitment to all of the people of Colorado.

Allison Pickles, she/her
Licensed Professional Counselor
Lakewood, CO



For Young LGBTQ Lives

March 25, 2026
Colorado House
Judiciary Committee

RE: Support (FAV) for [HB26-1322](#) – Civil Actions for Conversion Therapy Survivors

Chair Mabrey and members of the Judiciary Committee,

[The Trevor Project](#) writes in strong support of HB26-1322, which would extend the statute of limitations for survivors of conversion “therapy” practices.

The Trevor Project is the leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ+ young people. Trevor offers 24/7 crisis services, connecting highly trained counselors with LGBTQ+ young people whenever they need support. To further our mission of ending LGBTQ+ youth suicide, Trevor is dedicated to ending the practices commonly referred to as “conversion therapy” – practices condemned by every reputable medical and mental health organization as harmful, ineffective, unethical, and built on theories that have been debunked for decades.

Research & Data

We don’t just oppose conversion therapy on principle – we see its consequences every day in our crisis work. In the last year, more than 1,200 of our crisis conversations from over 500 cities and towns across the country explicitly raised conversion therapy. Young people brought it up themselves, in the middle of their darkest moments.

The data behind these conversations is sobering. Our 2024 National Survey found that [14% of Colorado’s LGBTQ+ young people reported being threatened with or subjected to conversion therapy](#). Those youth were more than twice as likely to have attempted suicide in the past year.

In Colorado, where [41% of LGBTQ+ young people](#) already seriously considered suicide in the past year –including 47% of transgender and nonbinary young people – **giving survivors a meaningful path to accountability is one of the most powerful tools we have to fight back.**

These practices are not a relic of the past. Our latest research suggests conversion therapy is [on the rise](#), with [at least 1,300 active practitioners](#) documented across the country. The harm is ongoing – and so are the costs. A peer-reviewed study in an American Medical Association journal found that practitioners have extracted millions of dollars from vulnerable families to pay for these practices– to the tune of [\\$650 million](#). Indirect costs, including treating the depression, trauma, and suicide attempts left in its wake, total [more than \\$8 billion](#). This bill ensures survivors have the opportunity to hold them financially accountable.

Why HB26-1322

As attacks on the well-being of LGBTQ+ youth mental health rise, so does the potential for them to be subject to this harmful practice. Survivors deserve justice. But seeking justice requires time – time for survivors to process what happened to them, time to find the words, time to build



For Young LGBTQ Lives

support systems, time to heal from the shame and manipulation to come forward. The current statute of limitations doesn't account for the severity or complexity of the harm these practices cause.

The Trevor Project strongly supports **HB26-1322** and urges the Committee to vote favorably. HB26-1322 gives survivors the chance to seek the justice they deserve on a timeline that reflects the gravity of what was done to them. It also sends a clear message to practitioners that these harmful practices will not go unanswered – a deterrent effect that protects the next generation of LGBTQ youth.

For questions, please contact:

Tanner Mobley

Tanner Mobley

Manager of State Advocacy

Tanner.Mobley@TheTrevorProject.org