

## **STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION 2023-1288**

### **TITLE: A Resolution Condemning the Practice of Conversion Therapy**

**AUTHOR(S):** LGBTQ+ Caucus Chairperson & Judiciary Vice Chair Joaquin R. C. Marcelino, Senate President Oscar Santiago Perez

**SPONSORS:** Judiciary Chair Jonathan C. Stephens, Majority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelotn, Deputy Majority Party Leader Chalisa Budhai, Senator Anghelo Gangano, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Cec Wood-Barron, Senator Saketh Damera, Senator Laurie Wang, Senator Matthew Reich, Senator John Lin

**WHEREAS**, the American Medical Association has issued a brief saying that “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” refers to any form of intervention or operation that attempts to “change an individual’s sexual orientation or sexual behaviors”, which may include their gender identity [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, these practices may include “aversive conditioning (e.g., electric shock, deprivation of food or liquids, smelling salts and chemically-induced nausea), biofeedback, hypnosis” [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the American Counseling Association (ACA) describes conversion therapy as “the discredited practice of using ‘therapy’ to attempt to change someone’s sexual orientation” [2]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the ACA opposes the practice as it is ineffective at its purported goal and can cause harm to the patient, along with violating the ACA’s Code of Ethics [2]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the American Psychiatric Association has affirmed that homosexuality is not a mental disorder since 1973 and, since 1998, has opposed any “reparative” therapy that is based on that notion [3]; and,

**WHEREAS**, conversion therapy has been linked to an increased risk of suicide among LGB youth as they are almost “twice as likely to think about suicide and to attempt suicide compared to their peers who hadn’t experienced conversion therapy” [4]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the American Medical Association cites that “[i]n young adults between 15 and 24 years old, suicide has been the leading cause of death since 2011” [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, conversion therapy is cited to be a “minority stressor that reinforces the stigma and conveys that being [LGBTQIA+] is abnormal, sinful, and should be rejected” [4]; and,

**WHEREAS**, a study has shown that seventy-seven percent (77%) of those who underwent “conversion therapy” suffer from long-term harm including “depression, anxiety, lowered self-esteem, internalized homophobia, self-blame, intrusive imagery, [and] sexual dysfunction” [1]; and,

**WHEREAS**, twenty-two (22) states have enacted bans on conversion therapy for minors, representing forty-seven percent (47%) of LGBTQIA+ youth [5]; and,

**WHEREAS**, in 2019, Alachua County banned the usage of conversion therapy on minors in a unanimous vote [6]; and,

**WHEREAS**, a study found that conversion therapy in the United States is estimated to cost \$650.16 million annually and its associated costs, including suicide attempts and substance abuse, total an estimated economic burden of \$9.23 billion [7]; and,

**WHEREAS**, the University of Florida Student Senate has affirmed its support for the LGBTQIA+ community at the University of Florida and around the nation through its passage of resolutions such as Student Senate Bill 2022-1047: Resolution Condemning “The Johns Committee”; Student Senate Bill 2022-1060: Resolution Recognizing October as LGBTQIA+ History Month; Student Senate Bill 2022-1064: Resolution Advocating for Expanded Access to Gender Affirming Care in the State of Florida; Student Senate Bill 2022-1066: Resolution Memorializing the Lives Lost at Club Q in Colorado Spring, Colorado; and the many efforts to ensure gender neutral wording in the governing documents of the University of Florida Student Government [8]; and,

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate condemns the usage of conversion therapy as it has no proven medical benefits and can perpetuate harm upon the LGBTQIA+ community.

**THEREFORE LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate supports all those victims of conversion therapy, acknowledged their experiences, and advocates for their well-being through resources provided by the Counseling and Wellness Center, GatorWell, the Office of LGBTQ+ Student Engagement, and other resources to provide any physiological or psychological care they need.

**THEREFORE LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for the banning of the practice of conversion therapy in the State of Florida and at the federal level in the United States, as well as advocates for LGBTQIA+ rights around the world.

**THEREFORE LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED** that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for the education of the adverse effects of conversion therapy in its professional schools dealing with healthcare and human rights such as the Levin College of Law and the College of Medicine to ensure that its professional graduates may be well-informed and abide by the ethical standards of the American Medical Association and other healthcare related national organizations.

*Proviso: A copy of this resolution will be sent to President of the United States Joseph R. Biden, Jr., United States Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, University President Ben Sasse, Dean of the UF College of Medicine Dr. Colleen G. Koch, Vice Dean for Education of the UF College of Medicine Dr. Joseph C. Fantone, Assistant Dean of Medical Education Quality Improvement & Accreditation of the UF College of Medicine Dr. Maureen Novak, interim-Dean of the UF Levin College of Law Merritt McAlister, Associate Dean for Academic Programs of the UF Levin College of Law Sabrina Lopez, Associate Dean for Curriculum of the UF Levin College of Law Amy Stein, Assistant Dean for Experiential Learning and Engagement of the UF Levin College of Law M Smith, Counseling and Wellness Director Ernesto Escoto, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida Speaker of the House Paul Renner, Florida Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, Gainesville Mayor Harvey Ward, Gainesville City Commission, the Alachua County Board of Commissioners, CIME interim-Director Elle Collins, CIME Administrative Assistant Dominic Jamiro, and Office of LGBTQ+ Student Engagement Program Director Jamir Wright.*

- [1]: <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/conversion-therapy-issue-brief.pdf>
- [2]: [https://www.counseling.org/government-affairs/  
state-issues/conversion-therapy-bans](https://www.counseling.org/government-affairs/state-issues/conversion-therapy-bans)
- [3]: [https://www.psychiatry.org/getattachment/  
3d23f2f4-1497-4537-b4de-fe32fe8761bf/Position-Conversion-Therapy.pdf](https://www.psychiatry.org/getattachment/3d23f2f4-1497-4537-b4de-fe32fe8761bf/Position-Conversion-Therapy.pdf)
- [4]: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/lgb-suicide-ct-press-release/>
- [5]: [https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion\\_therapy](https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/conversion_therapy)
- [6]: <https://www.eqfl.org/alachua-county-passes-ban-conversion-therapy>
- [7]: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8902682/>
- [8]: <https://sg.ufl.edu/branches/legislative/senate-resources/>