

RESOLUTION NO. 20191114-056

WHEREAS, there is a long and severe history of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) people throughout this nation under which LGBTQ+ people have been subjected to violence and threats of violence, denied services at businesses, prevented from obtaining housing, forced from their homes, fired from their jobs, and denied job opportunities; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by its Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index score of 100, the City of Austin has a proud tradition as an exemplar for acceptance and inclusiveness of LGBTQ+ employees and residents; and

WHEREAS, Austin is home to one of the largest populations of LGBTQ+ residents in Texas, and has long sought to protect the rights and secure the safety and well-being of the citizens who often find themselves subject to oppression and persecution; and

WHEREAS, the City's housing ordinance (City Code § 5-1-1(B)) protects individuals from discrimination in the area of housing (terms and conditions, renting, leasing, buying or selling) based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, student status, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or source of income; and

WHEREAS, the City's public accommodations ordinance (City Code § 5-2-1(B)) makes it unlawful for any place of business to deny access to goods and services to

anyone because of that person's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, or disability; and

WHEREAS, Council Resolution No. 20090806-037 requires all City contractors to comply with the City of Austin's non-discrimination policies, inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, the City ensures its own health care coverage is LGBTQ+ inclusive in all ways, including providing domestic partner benefits and transgender-inclusive healthcare; and

WHEREAS, practices labeled as "conversion," "reparative," or "reorientation" therapy (collectively, "conversion therapy") are discredited techniques which attempt to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity from LGBTQ+ to heterosexual using psychological or spiritual interventions; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ youth experience the harmful effects of stigma and discrimination when they are forced or coerced into undergoing conversion therapy, because as minors they cannot effectively refuse or prevent conversion therapy wanted by parents or other authorities; and

WHEREAS, the LGBTQ+ community's risk of suicide is six-eight times greater than the general population's risk, with transgender people, LGBTQ+ seniors, and LGBTQ+ people of color at highest risk; and

WHEREAS, suicide is the second most common cause of death among 18-25 year-olds in the United States, and research has consistently shown higher rates of suicidal ideation, self-harm, and suicide attempts among LGBTQ+ youth compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers; and

WHEREAS, research studies and other available evidence show that practices such as conversion therapy that attempt to change a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity pose a significant risk of serious emotional and physical harm to youth who undergo them, such as anxiety, depression, hopelessness, social withdrawal, illegal drug use, and suicidality; and

WHEREAS, there is consensus among leading national and international organizations that have existing policy statements in support of overturning harmful conversion therapy practices, including the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American School Counselor Association, American Counseling Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American College of Physicians, American Medical Association, the Pan American Health Organization, a regional office of the World Health Organization, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the American Bar Association, American School Counselor Association, American School Health Association, the National Association of Social Workers, American Association of School Administrators,

American Federation of Teachers, Interfaith Alliance Foundation, National Association of School Psychologists, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Education Association, and School Social Work Association of America; and

WHEREAS, conversion therapy has been banned by at least 47 municipalities (including New York City, Denver, Columbus, Washington DC, Miami, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Seattle); banned in 18 states (including Hawaii, Maryland, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington); and banned in localities within at least seven countries worldwide (The United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Taiwan, Spain, Brazil, and Ecuador); and

WHEREAS, the Council desires to prevent the irreversible harm caused by conversion therapy by taking any and all proactive steps to renounce the practice, and preventing the use of City funds, support or resources to organizations or providers engaged in this practice; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Council expresses its strong opposition to the practice of conversion therapy and directs the City Manager to prevent using City funds, support, or resources for the following activities, or providing City funds, support, or resources to individuals or organizations that engage in the following activities:

- practicing conversion therapy;

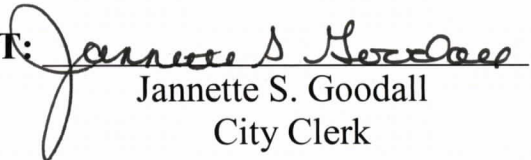
- referring persons to a healthcare provider or other person or organization for conversion therapy;
- contracting with another entity to conduct conversion therapy; or
- providing any type of benefits to City employees which include coverage wholly or in part for conversion therapy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to explore all other areas in which the harmful practice of conversion therapy could be further restricted within City government and within the City overall, and to report back to the LGBTQ+ Quality of Life Commission and the Council with any additional recommendations by January 30, 2020.

ADOPTED: November 14, 2019

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk