



June 29, 2021

Honourable Senators,

The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC) is writing to you today to express our support for Bill C-6, an Act to amend the Criminal Code that would prohibit conversion therapy in Canada. The CCRC wholeheartedly agrees with the introduction of legislation to ban conversion therapy, and we believe this is a necessary step in upholding Canada's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Human Rights of the Child (CRC) and Canada's own Human Rights Act.

The CCRC is a network of Canadian organizations and individuals who promote and advocate for the rights of children. Our purpose is to exchange information; provide public education materials about the Convention on the Rights of the Child; monitor implementation of the Convention in Canada; and engage in dialogue with government officials on child rights issues.

We assert that the practice of conversion therapy and its intent to try and change the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of children violates several relevant Articles of the UN's CRC. First, the practice of conversion therapy violates Article 2 of the UN's CRC which safeguards children's right to protection against discrimination. It also defies Article 3 by failing to ensure that protection is provided and aligned with a child's well being. Moreover, it violates Article 19 that requires Canada to protect children "from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation".

Furthermore, the proposed legislation would effectively uphold the Canadian Human Rights Act by protecting children and young people in Canada from discrimination based on their gender identity, gender expression, and sexual identity. The protections outlined in Bill C-6 affirm the

rights of trans, gender diverse and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth to live free from harm and protected against discrimination.

While the CCRC endorses Bill C-6, we want to offer some recommendations for amendments to ensure the protection of all 2SLGBTQ+ people in Canada:

Recommendation 1: Building on well-established precedents throughout the Criminal Code, include a no-consent provision to ensure all Canadians are protected from all instances of conversion therapy. This is particularly important for the realization of children's rights.

Recommendation 2: Update the language related to “a practice, treatment, or service that relates to the exploration and development of an integrated personal identity” to clarify the definition of conversion therapy and reaffirm access to gender-affirming healthcare. Young people who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ consistently note that healthcare services must be accessible to them, in a way that fits with their identity.

Recommendation 3: In the Bill and/or the Senate debate hansard, edit to acknowledge the overrepresentation of 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Canada's child welfare systems and to state that the purpose of this legislation should not be to criminalize parents or separate them from their children but instead to positively affirm the rights of children as outlined above to be free from such coercive influence.

The CCRC supports the Federal government's commitment to protecting the rights of trans, gender diverse and 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth. Conversion therapy is exploitative, harmful, and violates the rights of all 2SLGBTQ+ people. We urge you to listen to the voices of conversion therapy survivors and of 2SLGBTQ+ children and youth who are often impacted by discrimination. We encourage you to vote in favour of Bill C-6.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children