



February 20, 2021

Mayor Linda Gorton and Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council,

Today I write to you in support of Lexington banning conversion therapy on minors. As a former Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission Chair, and as a Presiding Elder of the Bluegrass District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, I am committed to supporting equity, diversity and discrimination protections. I support helping everyone live their life with love and oppose efforts to tell our youth they are wrong living as they were born.

I believe conversion therapy is neither productive, nor necessary. Professional organizations from around the world including the American Psychiatric Association agree this form of therapy, especially when administered on our youth, does not provide help, and in many cases, only causes harm ([APA Reiterates Strong Opposition to Conversion Therapy \(psychiatry.org\)](https://www.psychiatry.org)). Many studies have shown the potential harmful effects of this therapy, and our medical and mental health professionals do not support it.

As a faith leader, it is my duty to love and support my congregations. It is my joy to shepherd them to learn and understand the love of God. And we all should be loved for who we are, not pushed into a practice that tries to change our core selves. We are born perfect in the image of God, and we must continue to strive accepting others for who they are, and the gifts everyone is to our world.

As we continue the struggle for greater acceptance in our society, I believe a ban on conversion therapy is a positive step forward. Although this would be a great federal and state level initiative, we cannot stop just because others have not acted.

Lexington's LGBTQ Youth Mental Health Protection Ordinance will support youth who are facing so many pressures in their lives. Our world can be tough and being a child in

P.O. Box 54251
Lexington, Kentucky 40555-4251
(502) 333-5075
ElderGolphin@aol.com
www.bgd.ame13.com

this environment is already hard. Adding on the pressure of what happens in conversion therapy is not helpful in this world.

We can do better by learning to love our children, help guide them, and accept them as they are. I applaud the move forward to protect our LGBTQ youth and look to you to support this ordinance.

Yours in Faith and Love,

Rev. Kenneth J. Golphin
Presiding Elder
Bluegrass District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

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