



Department of Psychology
012-B Kastle Hall
171 Funkhouser Drive
Lexington, KY 40506-0044

Rachel H. Farr, PhD
Associate Professor
(859) 257-4393
rachel.farr@uky.edu

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Mayor Linda Gorton and the Urban County Council
200 East Main Street
Lexington, KY 40507

Dear Mayor Gorton and members of the Urban County Council:

I am writing in strong support of the LGBTQ Youth Mental Health Protection Ordinance, which would protect LGBTQ+ youth in ensuring they do not experience sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) and/or gender identity change efforts (GICE). Below, I note my qualifications in offering this support as well as evidence that SOCE and GICE are traumatic and injurious.

I am a trained developmental psychologist and an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Kentucky. For nearly 15 years, my research has focused on the experiences of LGBTQ+ people and their families. My work about LGBTQ+ parents and their children has been cited in numerous court cases, including amicus briefs filed in U.S. Supreme Court cases such as *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the marriage equality case in 2015, and *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*, a current case regarding religious exemption laws that limit LGBTQ+ adults in becoming foster and adoptive parents. My research has been published in top developmental psychology journals such as *Child Development* and *Developmental Psychology* and is currently funded by the William T. Grant Foundation. I have devoted considerable attention to developmental stages of childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, so I understand well that these are time periods when LGBTQ+ youth may be subjected to SOCE and GICE and are most at risk of their harmful effects.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are not disorders to be treated or cured; rather, they comprise a range of identities and experiences to be affirmed and celebrated. SOCE and GICE are unethical and harmful practices; research has clearly and consistently demonstrated negative impacts of conversion therapies to the mental, emotional, and physical health of LGBTQ+ people ([American Psychological Association, 2019](#)). In contrast, positive health outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth and adults are associated with support from family and friends as well as institutions, such as local and national policies that protect LGBTQ+ people in domains of education, employment, housing, health care, parenting and family, religion, public accommodations and other services ([National Academies of Sciences, 2020](#)). Just this past week, on February 26, 2021, the American Psychological Association (APA) passed a resolution opposing GICE for the first time and a revised one opposing SOCE, building from earlier resolutions to confirm and deepen understanding of the deleterious effects of these practices. Thus, for these reasons, I ask you to support the LGBTQ Youth Mental Health Protection Ordinance. It is imperative that we protect LGBTQ+ youth who are vulnerable to the harms of SOCE and GICE. In supporting this ordinance, we will safeguard and affirm the positive health and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth now and in the future.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rachel H. Farr'.

Rachel H. Farr, Ph.D.