

Metro Weekly, DC, USA

Washington State Senate votes to ban conversion therapy

A recent switch to Democratic control of upper chamber ensures a vote -- and victory -- for LGBTQ advocates

By John Riley on January 19, 2018

The Washington State Senate voted 32-16 to ban license therapists from subjecting LGBTQ-identifying youth to conversion therapy designed to change their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Six Republicans crossed over to vote with the chamber's Democratic majority to approve the ban. The Democrats, who [won the majority](#) on Nov. 7, 2017, have long wanted to pass a bill banning conversion therapy, but were hamstrung by Republican leadership, who had refused to allow a vote on the measure in past sessions.

The measure now heads to the House of Representatives, which Democrats control 50-48. The bill's success in the Senate will likely embolden House leadership to pass the bill and send it to the desk of Gov. Jay Inslee (D) for its signature into law later this year.

Thus far, conversion therapy has been banned in the District of Columbia and 10 states: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Vermont. A number of municipalities, including cities and counties in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington State, Florida, and Arizona, have also banned the practice, though statewide bills have been defeated in the past.

Earlier this month, LGTBQ advocates enjoyed success when Broward County, the Florida county that contains Fort Lauderdale, passed a ban prohibiting the practice. But this week, they suffered a defeat when the Virginia Senate [killed a similar bill](#).

The Human Rights Campaign and National Center for Lesbian Rights both hailed the victory in the Senate, and encouraged Democrats in the House and Inslee to move to pass the legislation as soon as possible.

"No child should ever be subjected to the dangerous and barbaric practice of conversion therapy. It amounts to nothing more than child abuse," Marty Rouse, HRC's National Field Director. "We applaud the Washington State Senate for voting to protect the Evergreen State's LGBTQ youth."

"Today, the state of Washington is one step closer to passing a bill to protect youth from dangerous conversion therapy," NCLR Youth Policy Counsel and #BornPerfect Campaign Coordinator Carolyn Reyes said in a statement. "Therapists who engage in these discredited

treatments put young people at risk of serious harms including suicide, depression, and substance abuse. Washington families and children deserve better.”

<http://www.metroweekly.com/2018/01/washington-state-senate-votes-ban-conversion-therapy/>