

Twenty-five years ago, I was nineteen years old, a Christian, and same sex attracted. I decided to pursue a therapeutic approach aimed at helping me bring my sexuality into agreement with my faith. As a young person dealing with same sex attractions, I enjoyed the benefit of good psychotherapists and faith-based organizations to help me bring my sexuality into agreement with my faith as a Christian. I was not coerced or harmed by either; in fact, I was helped greatly. This ordinance would criminalize help and psychotherapeutic resources for those who are in profound need. As a youth, it would have taken away my power of choice to self-determine my own desired trajectory for my life.

Faith and sexuality are extremely important issues. For me, my faith guides the expression and experience of my sexuality, not the laws of the land or current cultural understanding. There are many others like me who feel the same way, young people who are making different choices about their same sex attractions and gender confusion than the social norm. They are denying themselves and yielding to Jesus. And in doing so, are finding their true selves.

Through talk therapy, wise counsel and spiritual disciplines, I experienced a profound shift in my sexual orientation. **I am glad I made this choice, and I am grateful for the freedom to self-direct my counseling.** The benefits have been paramount: I have been married to my wife (a woman) for seventeen years and I have three beautiful children.

THEREFORE, I support therapeutic choice for all Minnesotans, and I urge you to do the same. HF 2156 and the harm it will bring to many people of faith must be stopped.

I encourage you to get to know us. Listen to our stories. Ask us questions about the choices we have made regarding our sexuality. Ask us about our faith and how it guided those very important decisions. Do not marginalize us with ordinances. And, do not criminalize our understanding of freedom.

Sincerely,

Nate Oyloe