

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
TAMPA DIVISION

ROBERT L. VAZZO, LMFT, individually
and on behalf of his patients, DAVID H.
PICKUP, LMFT, individually and on
behalf of his patients,

CASE NO. 8:17-cv-02896-CEH-AAS

Plaintiffs,

v.

CITY OF TAMPA, FLORIDA,

Defendant.

DEFENDANT, CITY OF TAMPA'S, NOTICE OF FILING AND REQUEST THAT
COURT TAKE JUDICIAL NOTICE OF TRANSCRIPTS – PREPARED BY A
STENOGRAPHIC SHORTHAND REPORTER – OF EXCERPTS OF MEETINGS OF
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 16, 2017, MARCH 2, 2017, MARCH 16,
2017 AND APRIL 6, 2017, AND MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT
THEREOF

Defendant, City of Tampa (“City”), hereby gives notice of filing, and requests that the Court take judicial notice of, the attached transcripts of excerpts of the City Council meetings held on February 16, 2017, March 2, 2017, March 16, 2017, and April 6, 2017.

In support thereof, the City alleges as follows:

Background

1. On April 6, 2017, Tampa City Council passed Ordinance No. 2017-47 relating to conversion therapy on patients who are minors (“the Ordinance”), and on April 10, 2017, Mayor Buckhorn approved the Ordinance.
2. The Ordinance is the subject of the within lawsuit.

3. At the March 16, 2017 City Council meeting, when the Ordinance was being presented for first reading, and at the April 6, 2017 City Council meeting when the Ordinance was being presented for second reading and adoption, a number of individuals offered public comment on the subject of the Ordinance. In addition, on March 2, 2017 and February 16, 2017, there was also public comment at the City Council meetings concerning the subject matter of the Ordinance.

4. The City is attaching hereto transcripts of excerpts from each of the aforesaid City Council meetings wherein public testimony was offered concerning the subject of the Ordinance. Each of the transcripts were transcribed by a Stenographic Shorthand Reporter from DVDs of the aforesaid City Council meetings.

5. The City requests that the Court take judicial notice of the attached transcripts of the excerpts of the aforesaid City Council meetings.

6. The City, under a separate Motion, is also seeking leave to file with the Clerk of Court - and requesting that the Court take judicial notice of - the DVDs of the aforesaid City Council meetings.

7. The City believes that the attached transcripts will be of assistance to the Court, and will also complement the Court's review of the DVDs if the Court permits the City to file the DVDs with the Clerk of Court.

Argument

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 201(b), the Court "may judicially notice a fact that is not subject to reasonable dispute because it: (1) is generally known within the trial

court's territorial jurisdiction; or (2) can be accurately and readily determined from sources whose accuracy cannot be reasonably questioned.”

In the matter at hand, the authenticity of the attached transcripts should not be subject to dispute as they were prepared by a Stenographic Shorthand Reporter, and they reflect the public comment concerning the Ordinance, as well as colloquy by City Council concerning the Ordinance, at the February 16, 2017, March 2, 2017, March 16, 2017, and April 6, 2017 City Council meetings. Each of the transcripts, moreover, attach a “Certificate of Reporter.”

Finally, the authenticity of the transcripts may be further corroborated by reviewing the DVDs of the City Council meetings held on February 16, 2017, March 2, 2017, March 16, 2017, and April 6, 2017 and, to that end, the City is also filing a Motion requesting that the Court permit the City to file with the Clerk of Court - and that this Court take judicial notice of - a true and correct copy of the DVDs of the City Council Meetings held on February 16, 2017, March 2, 2017, March 16, 2017, and April 6, 2017.

Conclusion

For all the aforesaid reasons, it is respectfully requested that this Honorable Court take judicial notice of the attached transcripts of excerpts of the meetings of City Council held on February 16, 2017, March 2, 2017, March 16, 2017, and April 6, 2017.

Consultation with Plaintiffs' Counsel

In accordance with Local Rule 3.01(g), the City's counsel has conferred with Plaintiffs' counsel concerning the relief set forth herein and counsel for Plaintiffs object to the relief requested herein.

/s/ Jerry M. Gewirtz

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on January 12 2018 the foregoing was electronically filed with the Clerk of Court and a copy is being furnished by email to the following: Roger K. Gannam, Esquire at rgannam@lc.org; Horatio G. Mihet, Esquire at hmihet@lc.org; Mathew D. Staver, Esquire at mat@lc.org and court@lc.org; and Daniel J. Schmid, Esquire at dschmid@lc.org (Liberty Counsel, P.O. Box 540774, Orlando, FL 32854).

By: /s/ Jerry M. Gewirtz

Jerry M. Gewirtz, Esquire

IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING on 02/16/2017

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IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

STENOGRAPHICALLY TRANSCRIBED VIA DVD

EXCERPTS OF
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE TAKEN: FEBRUARY 16, 2017
TIME: 9:24 A.M.
PLACE: TAMPA CITY HALL
315 EAST KENNEDY BOULEVARD
THIRD FLOOR
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33602
TRANSCRIBED BY: MICHELE COBURN, FPR

1 APPEARANCES :

2

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7

8 TAMPA CITY COUNCIL:

9

MIKE SUAREZ, CHAIRMAN
10 CHARLIE MIRANDA
YVONNE YOLIE CAPIN
11 HARRY COHEN
GUIDO MANISCALCO
12 LUIS VIERA

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 9:24 a.m. of DVD.)

3 MR. SUAREZ: Is there anyone else in the public
4 that would like to speak at this time on any item
5 except for Items 50 through 59? Please come forward
6 if you do.

7 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:24 a.m.
8 of DVD.)

9 MR. KEMPLE: I thought that just signing up out
10 there put me on the list.

11 MR. SUAREZ: Go ahead. Tell us your name.
12 This is your time now. Don't have a discussion with
13 me. Go ahead and talk to us.

14 MR. KEMPLE: No. No. That's fine.

15 My name is Terry Kemple. And today you're
16 going to be discussing whether the City of Tampa
17 should impose a ban on professionals providing what
18 you call conversion therapy to minors.

19 As I've looked at the reports of your comments
20 on January 26th, the things that pop out to me were,
21 one, you said that professionals shouldn't be
22 allowed to provide -- provide this therapy because
23 it's harmful to children, basically equating it with
24 child abuse.

25 You said that they shouldn't be allowed to

1 provide this therapy because homosexuality is no
2 longer considered a mental illness.

3 And you said, three, that the fact that
4 you're -- or three is the fact that you're even
5 discussing this ban would give the indication that
6 you think homosexuality is an innate unchangeable
7 characteristic.

8 On the first point, it's highly unlikely --
9 unlikely that you'll be able to find even one
10 credible case of a child being harmed by a counselor
11 explaining to the child that there is the
12 possibility of escaping from unwanted sexual
13 attractions.

14 Most of the counselors that provide this
15 therapy introduce Jesus Christ as the divine healer
16 who can help them.

17 And still on the first point, if you truly
18 believe that it's child abuse, why would you exempt
19 anyone, including churches and ministers? If you
20 really believe it's child abuse, why would you say
21 that it's okay for anyone to commit child abuse?

22 On the second point, therapists counsel
23 patients on numerous things that are neither mental
24 illnesses nor diseases. Some of the things they
25 counsel clients on are pornography addictions,

1 marital infidelity, masturbation obsessions and
2 promiscuous lifestyles such as swinging. None of
3 these are mental illnesses, yet large numbers of
4 people seek treatment and counseling for them.

5 For many people who seek sexual therapy,
6 homosexuality is an adaptation that causes distress
7 in their lives. Mental health professionals are
8 able to help these clients deal with the distress
9 that their unwanted same-sex sexual attractions,
10 behaviors or identity can bring to their lives and
11 help them deal with the resulting anxiety or
12 pressure that results.

13 On the third point, the testimony of my Mark --
14 my friend Mark, who you'll hear from in a moment,
15 and thousands of others who have successfully
16 changed their sexual orientation, makes it clear
17 that there is hope for change for those who desire
18 it.

19 Oh. And one final point. Under Florida law,
20 you don't have the authority to pass a ban that
21 regulates the mental health profession. If you do,
22 you'll simply be inviting a lawsuit that you'll
23 lose.

24 My question is, what makes you think that you
25 know better than parents what is in the best

1 interest of their children?

2 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
3 9:27 a.m. of DVD.)

4 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

5 Just as a point of clarification, you kept
6 saying "you have said something" or "you have" --
7 excuse me -- and I don't think that myself or anyone
8 else on this dais have said any of the things that
9 you said.

10 So I appreciate your -- your public comment. I
11 just wanted to set the record straight. Thank you.

12 Anyone else that would like to speak on any
13 item except for Items 50 through 59?

14 Sir, please come forward.

15 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:28 a.m.
16 of DVD.)

17 MR. CULLIGAN: Good morning. My name is Mark
18 Culligan. I am a resident of Tampa and live in
19 South Tampa.

20 I am a former homosexual. I lived for 20 years
21 with a homosexual struggle. I have been out of
22 homosexual acting-out for 30 years. I went through
23 clinical and therapeutic interventions, and my life
24 is happy, contented, and I am at peace with who I am
25 today.

1 You should have been given a copy of a pamphlet
2 and a sheet with some myths on it. The pamphlet is
3 entitled "The Top Ten Myths about Homosexuality."

4 I want to thank the Family Research Council in
5 Washington, D.C., for publishing this resource.
6 This resource is professionally produced with
7 research used listed in the footnotes at the bottom
8 of each page.

9 For the sake of time, I would like to briefly
10 mention three of the myths to help you better
11 understand what's at stake as you discuss the
12 proposed ban on counseling for minors dealing with
13 same-sex attraction.

14 And I want to be clear that I don't support the
15 proposed law for two main reasons: the right of a
16 minor to make healthy choices about their lives, and
17 I think we should defend the right of parents to
18 make choices about what they feel is best for their
19 children.

20 Myth Number 1: People are born gay. Fact:
21 The research does not show that anyone is born gay
22 and suggest instead that homosexuality results from
23 a complex mix of developmental factors.

24 Myth Number 2: Sexual orientation can never
25 change. Fact: Thousands of men and women have

1 testified to experiencing a change in their sexual
2 orientation from homosexual to heterosexual.
3 Research confirms such change does occur, sometimes
4 spontaneously and sometimes as a result of
5 therapeutic intervention.

6 Myth Number 3: Efforts to change someone's
7 sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual
8 are harmful and unethical. Fact: There is no
9 scientific evidence that changed efforts create
10 greater harm than the homosexual lifestyle itself.
11 The real ethical violation is when clients are
12 denied the opportunity to set their own goals for
13 therapy.

14 I just encourage you to please take a look at
15 this and be better informed as you consider this law
16 that you're considering. You are intelligent people
17 and you want to review the facts and the research
18 before you consider this -- this ban.

19 Thank you for your time.

20 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
21 9:31 a.m. of DVD.)

22 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

23 Anyone else like to speak at this time, please
24 come forward.

25 And before you speak, ma'am, is there -- if

1 there's anyone else that would like to speak on any
2 item except for 50 through 59, if you could stand up
3 so we know how many other folks we have that are
4 going to be speaking. Stand to the side of the --
5 of the seats.

6 Ma'am, I'm sorry.

7 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:31 a.m.
8 of DVD.)

9 MS. BROWN: My name is Cathy Brown and I live
10 in Hillsborough County. And I am opposed to any
11 regulation concerning conversion therapy. Parents
12 and doctors know best for their children.

13 Our state regulates professionals, doctors,
14 psychiatrists. That is not something for the city
15 or the county to do. These professionals are
16 trained to help people. They're trained to deal
17 delicately with personal problems, with stress.

18 Of course, coming out as a homosexual is a
19 stressful event, and these professionals know best
20 what to do. Government does not need to -- to keep
21 butting into family problems. Family problems
22 should be solved by the family, their ministers and
23 their doctors. Thank you.

24 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
25 9:32 a.m. of DVD.)

1 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

2 Anyone else want to speak at this time?

3 Ma'am, if you're going to speak, as I ask,
4 please stand up, come forward.

5 You're first, sir. Go ahead.

6 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:33 a.m.
7 of DVD.)

8 MR. THORPE: Hello. My name is David Thorpe.

9 At the age of seven I was actually introduced
10 to sex and sexuality, which I do not believe that
11 children should be.

12 Unfortunately, because of today, the -- the
13 media, the TV or whatever, you watch commercials and
14 you see it. So it is what it is, unfortunately.

15 Because of that, I've struggled my entire life.
16 I am now 50. I did go into homosexuality at the age
17 of 23 for 18 years. I watched a lot of people die
18 of AIDS and HIV. I believe it is a choice.

19 I can say today I've -- I've been out of
20 homosexuality for nine years and I am happily
21 married. March 23rd will be four years. Thank you
22 for your time.

23 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
24 9:33 a.m. of DVD.)

25 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

1 Next, please.

2 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: I don't want to speak.

3 Am I able to ask a question during this time?

4 MR. SUAREZ: No. This is for your public
5 comments.

6 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Okay.

7 MR. SUAREZ: I mean, if the question has to do
8 with whether or not you can speak on a particular
9 item -- is that the question?

10 (Inaudible.)

11 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Okay.

12 MR. SUAREZ: I'm sorry. Okay. Go ahead.

13 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN:
14 Thank you.

15 I wanted to know -- an item that we're not able
16 to speak on, was it presented to the public first?

17 MR. SUAREZ: No. Items that are not being --
18 that you're not able to speak on now, Items 50
19 through 59 --

20 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Right.

21 MR. SUAREZ: -- have to do with public
22 hearings. They get open and then you can speak at
23 that time.

24 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: That's what I wanted to
25 know.

1 MR. SUAREZ: You can't speak about it until
2 that time.

3 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: That's what I wanted to
4 know.

5 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am.

6 Is there anyone else in the public that would
7 like to speak on any item except for 50 through 59?
8 If so, please come forward now.

9 I see no one.

10 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 9:34 a.m. of
11 DVD.)

12 (Meeting continues.)

13 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:11 a.m. of
14 DVD.)

15 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. Item Number 67. This is
16 Mr. Maniscalco's item. Mr. Territo, I think, wanted
17 to speak on this item before we start.

18 Go ahead, sir.

19 MR. TERRITO: Sal Territo, legal department.

20 We -- since we've looked at this issue -- and
21 the gentleman that spoke this morning -- we have
22 some of the same concerns: Can we regulate this?
23 And our research indicates that we probably can
24 because there's a provision in the statutes
25 regulating these professions that say if it's not

1 regulated by the state, the local governments have
2 some authority on that. We haven't thoroughly
3 looked at that, but that issue may be something we
4 can resolve.

5 However, since that time the Legislature, as
6 they often do, has introduced a bill, House Bill 17,
7 that would take away our authority to do any
8 regulation of any businesses; not only this one if
9 we were to pass this ordinance, but all of the
10 regulations and permits that we do now regulating
11 business.

12 If it is to -- if it passes -- and we'll find
13 out, obviously, in the next couple of months, that
14 would have been retroactive to January 1st. So if
15 you were to pass an ordinance affecting this, it
16 might become void very quickly.

17 It's your decision if you want to continue with
18 this issue anyway, but it may be something that
19 becomes moot very quickly.

20 And our suggestion normally is that if it's
21 something pending before the Legislature that we
22 wait to hear that. But again, if you'd rather not
23 do that and you want to pass it, it may become void.
24 We will probably know in the next month or two.

25 There's no Senate bill companion. It may not

1 go anywhere. It may be changed drastically. At
2 this time we just don't have an answer for you.

3 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. Mr. Maniscalco, did you
4 want to continue with this, or did you want to take
5 his suggestion?

6 MR. MANISCALCO: No. I'd like to continue.
7 And the reason is we don't know what's going to
8 happen at the state level. It may pass -- their
9 bill; it may not pass.

10 You know, in the meantime, you know, we move
11 forward with this. Should it get to the Tallahassee
12 level where they remove our authority to regulate,
13 then it becomes null and void. But I'd like to move
14 forward with it, regardless.

15 MR. SUAREZ: You want to move forward now with
16 it?

17 MR. MANISCALCO: Yes. Right now.

18 MR. TERRITO: Well, we don't have an ordinance
19 before you. We'd have to bring one before you.

20 MR. MANISCALCO: Okay. When?

21 MR. TERRITO: But right now if you want to move
22 forward, you bring it back at your next regular
23 meeting as something to look at to put on first
24 reading if that's your wish.

25 MR. MANISCALCO: Okay.

1 MR. SUAREZ: Was there any discussion on moving
2 forward on this particular item at this time? And
3 if not, we'll let Mr. Maniscalco make a motion to --

4 Yes, sir. Go ahead.

5 MR. COHEN: Here's what I would request is, if
6 prior to the next meeting if you could reach out to
7 us individually so that if we want to talk to you
8 about what the provisions of this are, we can set an
9 appointment and discuss it prior to your coming in
10 front of us on the 2nd.

11 Would that be all right?

12 MR. TERRITO: That's fine.

13 And the other option would be -- I know we have
14 a lot of workshops. There are a lot of issues, not
15 only that we found in looking at this, but the
16 jurisdictions that are now doing it in South
17 Tampa -- they've had some problems, enforcement
18 problems. How do you move forward? Who does the
19 enforcement? Is it the police department? Is it
20 code enforcement?

21 A lot of them are using code enforcement, which
22 is an interesting way of looking at it. How do you
23 know it's happening?

24 So we have to address some issues with you.
25 Talking with you individually would work. Having a

1 small workshop on this with some of the issues --
2 that would work. I could also submit to you some of
3 the issues we have in writing and then have it
4 discussed. Whatever you prefer we can do.

5 But there are issues with how it's being
6 enforced in South Tampa right now.

7 MR. COHEN: South Florida.

8 MR. TERRITO: I'm sorry. South Florida. Oh,
9 boy. South Florida. Yes, sir.

10 MR. SUAREZ: Okay.

11 MR. TERRITO: That's it. But again, it's your
12 decision how you want to move forward on this.

13 MR. SUAREZ: All right. Any other questions or
14 comments before we move forward?

15 Okay. Mr. Maniscalco.

16 MR. MANISCALCO: Therefore, you know, if you're
17 going to be meeting with -- with us on an individual
18 basis, you know, we'll clear up any -- any
19 questions.

20 Then I would make a motion that -- that you
21 would come back at our next regularly-scheduled
22 meeting March 2nd under Staff Reports, and then
23 we'll move forward with the ordinance then.

24 MR. SUAREZ: You want -- you want a draft
25 ordinance at that time?

1 MR. MANISCALCO: A draft ordinance at that
2 time. Yes.

3 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. We have a motion from
4 Mr. Maniscalco to have the legal department come
5 back under Staff Reports on March 2nd with a draft
6 ordinance.

7 Do I have a second?

8 MS. CAPIN: Second.

9 MR. SUAREZ: I have a -- I have a motion from
10 Mr. Maniscalco, a second from Ms. Capin. All in
11 favor of that motion, please indicate by saying
12 "aye."

13 (MULTIPLE VOICES: Aye.)

14 MR. SUAREZ: Any opposed?

15 MR. MIRANDA: Aye.

16 THE CLERK: Motion carried with Miranda voting
17 no and Reddick being absent.

18 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

19 Okay. We have gone through most of our agenda.
20 We do have three items that are set for 10:30
21 hearing. So I will ask for a recess until 10:30.
22 We are in recess until 10:30.

23 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:16 a.m. of
24 DVD.)

25 (Council in recess.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH)

I, Michele Coburn, FPR, Stenographic Shorthand Reporter, Notary Public, State of Florida, CERTIFY that I was authorized to and did stenographically transcribe the foregoing proceedings from February 16, 2017, from a DVD-recorded proceeding; and that the transcript is a true and complete record to the best of my ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the attorneys or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 8th day of January, 2018.

Michele Coburn

MICHELE COBURN, FPR
Stenographic Shorthand Reporter
Notary Public, State of Florida

IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING on 03/02/2017

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IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

STENOGRAPHICALLY TRANSCRIBED VIA DVD

EXCERPTS OF
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE TAKEN: MARCH 2, 2017
TIME: 9:59 A.M.
PLACE: TAMPA CITY HALL
315 EAST KENNEDY BOULEVARD
THIRD FLOOR
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33602
TRANSCRIBED BY: MICHELE COBURN, FPR

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Excerpt begins at timestamp 9:59 a.m. of DVD.)

MR. COHEN: Next speaker, please.

MR. BOOTH: Thank you.

MR. COHEN: Good morning.

(Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:59 a.m.
of DVD.)

MR. CUTLER: Good morning, council members.

My name is Dave Cutler, and I am proud to live
in the City of Tampa, District 5, at 5708 North 9th
Street.

I also proudly serve as the president of the
Hillsborough County lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender
and now democratic caucus.

This is a city that has given LGBT citizens
protections against discrimination and allows
same-gender couples to be recognized by their city
government before marriage equality came to Florida
as a whole.

Many of you-all came to the Ybor City vigil the
day after the Pulse shootings to show your support
and respect.

I thank Councilman Maniscalco for his efforts
to add another layer of protection, this time for
our youth, who are coming to terms with who they

1 are, by banning so-called conversion therapy.

2 The American Medical Association, the American
3 Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric and
4 Psychological Associations and many, many others
5 have all said this practice is harmful, dangerous,
6 and during its heyday back in the 1990s led to a
7 sky-high suicide rate among LGBT youth.

8 After I came out in 1997, my mother was afraid
9 that I might become a statistic. Thanks to a
10 loving, supportive family, I was able to come to
11 terms with who I am, and -- and I am who I am today.

12 Exodus International, the preeminent
13 organization that participated in this
14 scientifically-unfounded and dangerous practice, has
15 closed its doors and apologized to the LGBT
16 community, saying that reparative therapy is both
17 futile and harmful.

18 John Paulk, chairman of the board of Exodus
19 International and affiliated with Focus on Family,
20 who claimed to be ex-gay, is now identifying as a
21 gay man.

22 These organizations claim that one can be saved
23 from the homosexual lifestyle. There is no such
24 thing as a homosexual lifestyle. The LGBT community
25 is as diverse as humanity itself.

1 I have been fortunate to be surrounded by
2 friends and family who accept me as I am. Not
3 everyone is as fortunate. But you have the power to
4 protect our youth from psychological and spiritual
5 assault.

6 I urge you to stand with -- with Councilman
7 Maniscalco, pass this ordinance, and send the same
8 message to Tampa's youth that my father said to me.
9 "You are my child, and I love you no matter what."

10 Thank you.

11 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
12 10:01 of DVD.)

13 MR. SUAREZ: Excuse me. Please don't walk up
14 to the speaker. We want to try and get through this
15 as much as we can. We want to make sure everybody
16 has a chance to speak.

17 So, ma'am, you are next.

18 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
19 10:02 a.m. of DVD.)

20 MS. GAINES: Hi. My name is Cathy Gaines. I
21 live out in Riverview, but I appreciate the
22 opportunity to speak with you-all because I work,
23 play and worship in the City of Tampa.

24 I want to thank you-all for your leadership in
25 regard to equality. And I also appreciate you-all

1 through a ban on reparative therapy, which I hope
2 that you-all will pass protecting our youth.

3 It's very, very important, as a more mature
4 individual, to make sure that our youth are
5 protected. And you-all, as city council members,
6 have always been on the leading edge, not only here
7 in the county of protecting, but also in the state.
8 And I really, really appreciate that.

9 This is not theory. There is an organization
10 with an address in Tampa, Florida, that is doing
11 reparative therapy. And this organization has net
12 income, according to their 990, of over \$366,000 in
13 net income over the past five years for doing this.
14 And so this is real.

15 And I want to let you know that it is not only
16 harmful; it is dangerous to our youth. There are
17 many people that have been damaged for their -- for
18 the rest of their life that have not been able to
19 achieve everything that they could have.

20 And I'm a firm believer that we are all made in
21 the image and likeness of God, and God didn't make
22 mistakes. And he didn't make mistakes with Dave.
23 He didn't make a mistake with me. He didn't make
24 mistakes with you-all.

25 And I appreciate your leadership in putting

1 this ban because your leadership will allow other
2 legislative bodies here in the county, here in the
3 state, here in the nation for moving forward also on
4 banning this therapy.

5 Thank you so much.

6 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
7 10:04 a.m. of DVD.)

8 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

9 Next, please, on this side. Yes.

10 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
11 10:04 a.m. of DVD.)

12 MS. LAZARUS: My name is Dana Lazarus. I live
13 at (inaudible) and I'm a pansexual woman. And
14 pansexual means that I'm attracted to people based
15 on their personality and their ability to make me
16 happy in a relationship, not on the body parts that
17 they happen to be born with.

18 I am about to tell you the experiences of a
19 person named Marcel, who could not be here because
20 he wishes to remain anonymous. But as a pansexual
21 woman, I can relate to what I'm about to tell you.

22 "My name is Marcel. I grew up in a very loving
23 but extremely religious household. I was taught
24 from a young age that you cannot live a life of
25 happiness if you are going against the will of God.

1 "When I was 18 my parents found some gay
2 websites in my search history. I was still living
3 at home at the time. They bought me a book called
4 'You Don't Have to be Gay Anymore.' I read it cover
5 to cover in two days.

6 "I had struggled since I was in elementary
7 school believing that there was something inherently
8 wrong with me. It consumed my every thought for
9 years, and I suffered from extreme depression.

10 "When I heard that I could possibly change my
11 attraction, I saw hope for myself. My parents got
12 me in contact with Exodus International, and I began
13 to go to monthly ex-gay conferences led by people
14 who claimed to have left the gay lifestyle. I later
15 found out that many of them had gone back to the
16 homosexual lifestyle.

17 "I joined a weekly Bible study for gay people
18 who no longer wanted to be gay and started seeing a
19 weekly therapist who specialized in conversion a/k/a
20 reparative therapy.

21 "I spent every day reading about changing my
22 sexual orientation, praying to God to change me and
23 meeting with people who convinced me that if I
24 stopped giving in to my temptation that I would be
25 doing what God wanted for me.

1 "I was told that my gay feelings might never go
2 away, but to be happy I just had to live like a
3 heterosexual person. It meant I had to remain
4 celibate and never be in a romantic relationship.

5 "Despite the loneliness I felt, I was
6 committed. I was obsessed. Every day it actually
7 got more and more difficult. My depression mounted
8 because I felt no change, no hope. And I could not
9 fathom what it would be like to live a life alone.

10 "My sexual orientation was as unchangeable as
11 the color of my eyes, but I continued to fight
12 against what I had felt since I was five years old.

13 "One day it became so unbearable for me that I
14 chose to swallow an entire bottle of pills that I
15 had found in the bathroom. I just wanted to be done
16 with this life and hope that there was something
17 better waiting for me in the next life.

18 "My parents found me sobbing with the empty
19 pill bottle and rushed me to the ER where my stomach
20 was pumped and I was Baker-Acted for a week.

21 "After this experience and after meeting a
22 number of people who had suffered through ex-gay
23 reparative therapy, I realized there was nothing I
24 could do to change my sexual orientation. It became
25 apparent that -- it became apparent that the promise

1 of happiness one day was nothing but false hope.

2 "My status and hatred had -- hatred had grown
3 to a level so severe that the only solution for me
4 was to quit this path and try to change myself. I
5 realized there was nothing I could do to change who
6 I was, who I was attracted to and who I wanted to
7 spend my life with.

8 "I told my parents that if they wanted me in
9 their lives at all, they had to stop pushing the
10 ex-gay agenda and accept me for who I was. I would
11 die if I continued down this path."

12 Thank you.

13 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
14 10:07 a.m. of DVD.)

15 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am.

16 Next, please, on this. I was just going to go
17 over here. She's standing up, too.

18 You're not?

19 MS. LONG: Yes.

20 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. Please come on up.

21 I apologize. I saw her up there, too.

22 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
23 10:07 a.m. of DVD.)

24 MS. LONG: Susan Long, 921 East Broad Street.

25 And I've given you a copy of what I'm about to

1 read, not because you can't read it so I have to
2 read it to you, but because I have some references
3 here. I did some research, and I want you to know
4 this is not just my perception. These are valid
5 research projects that have been done on this issue.

6 Conversion therapy is founded on the belief
7 that people choose to have a sexual orientation
8 other than heterosexual. Students have -- studies
9 have shown there's a genetic component to sexual
10 orientation and that there is a continuum.

11 This genetic component cannot be changed. Like
12 other traits, they're a combination of both genetic
13 and environmental. So to say a homosexual is just
14 going to stop being a homosexual is like telling my
15 children they need to stop being smart. After all,
16 one's test {sic} on an IQ test is both environmental
17 and hereditary.

18 The statement that only 3 percent of the
19 population is homosexual is just wrong. Studies
20 have shown that based on one's definition of
21 homosexual, the proportion of homosexual human
22 beings is between 10 and 20 percent.

23 The use of conversion therapy, reparative
24 therapy, sexual reorientation therapy, whatever you
25 want to call it, has been rejected by all of the

1 established and reputable American Medical,
2 Psychological, Psychiatric and professional
3 counseling organizations.

4 A very large number of professional, medical,
5 scientific and counseling organizations in the U.S.
6 and abroad have issued statements regarding the harm
7 reparative therapy can cause, particularly if it's
8 based on the assumption that homosexuality is
9 unacceptable.

10 As early as 1993 the American Academy of
11 Pediatrics stated that therapy directed at
12 specifically changing sexual orientation is
13 contraindicated since it can provoke guilt and
14 anxiety while having little to no potential for --
15 for achieving change in orientation.

16 The American Academy of Pediatrics --
17 (inaudible). This is still what you're talking
18 about in your ordinance: minors.

19 The American Medical Association officially
20 opposes reparative therapy that is, quote, based on
21 the assumption that homosexuality, per se, is a
22 mental disorder or based on a prior assumption that
23 the person should change his or her homosexual
24 orientation, unquote.

25 The Pan American Health Organization, the

1 world's oldest international public health agency,
2 issued a statement in 2012 that said in part,
3 "Services that purport to cure people with a
4 nonheterosexual orientation lack medical
5 justification and represent a serious threat to the
6 health and wellbeing of affected people, unquote.

7 The statement continues: "In none of the
8 individual manifestations does homosexuality
9 constitute a disorder or an illness and, therefore,
10 it requires no cure."

11 Some of the best evidence of the
12 ineffectiveness of conversion therapy is from 2013
13 when Exodus International, formerly one of the
14 largest ex-gay ministries in the world, shut down
15 after its director Alan Chambers issued an apology
16 to the LGBT community.

17 Chambers, who is married to a woman (inaudible)
18 the same-sex attraction -- same -- same-sex
19 attraction has not changed.

20 In a 2012 conference he said, "The majority of
21 people that I have met" --

22 MR. SUAREZ: Ms. Long, I'm sorry. I -- I --

23 MS. LONG: I know.

24 MR. SUAREZ: I know you're right near like the
25 last paragraph.

1 MS. LONG: Yes.

2 MR. SUAREZ: I thought you were going to catch
3 up, but it's okay.

4 MS. LONG: I thought so, too.

5 MR. SUAREZ: But thank you --

6 MS. LONG: Thank you.

7 MR. SUAREZ: -- for giving us a hard copy of
8 this. I appreciate that.

9 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
10 10:11 a.m. of DVD.)

11 MR. SUAREZ: Next, please.

12 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
13 10:11 a.m. of DVD.)

14 MS. SYKES: Jamie Sykes, 33606. Reading a
15 comment by my friend Dana Lazarus.

16 In this conversation about conversion therapy
17 it's important that we look at what has gone on with
18 organizations that have conducted it in the past.

19 Exodus International was one of the leading
20 organizations for conversion therapy between 1976
21 and 2013. At its peak Exodus included over 250
22 local ministries in the United States and Canada and
23 over 150 ministries in 17 other countries.

24 But in 1979 Michael Bussee, one of the founders
25 of Exodus, and Gary Cooper, a leader within the

1 ministry of Exodus, left the group to be with each
2 other.

3 Later in the year 2000 John Paulk was removed
4 from his position as chairman of Exodus
5 International because he was found to be frequenting
6 gay bars.

7 In 2013 Paulk renounced his former cause,
8 stating that his sexual orientation had never truly
9 changed. And I quote: I do not believe that
10 reparative therapy changes sexual orientation. In
11 fact, it does great harm to many people.

12 On June 19th, 2013, the organization's board of
13 directors announced the impending closing of Exodus
14 International. Exodus International president Alan
15 Chambers said that the board made the move after a
16 year of dialogue and prayer about the
17 organizations's place in a changing culture.

18 In his statement he addressed those who had
19 been through their conversion therapy program. He
20 said, "I am sorry for the pain and hurt many of you
21 have experienced. I am sorry that some of you spent
22 years working through the shame and guilt you felt
23 when your attractions didn't change. I am sorry we
24 promoted sexual orientation change effort and
25 reparative theories about sexual orientation that

1 stigmatized parents."

2 We must evolve as a culture the way Exodus
3 International evolved, by understanding that
4 conversion therapy is incredibly harmful to
5 participants, especially youth, and is perpetuating
6 harmful stereotypes in our culture.

7 Please think of Leelah Alcorn. Leelah was
8 raised in a conservative Christian household in
9 Ohio. At age 14 she came out as transgender to her
10 parents Carla and Doug Alcorn, who refused to accept
11 her female gender identity.

12 When she was 16 they denied her request to
13 undergo transition treatment, instead sending her to
14 Christian-based conversion therapy with the
15 intention of convincing her to reject her gender
16 identity and accept her gender as assigned at birth.

17 After she revealed her attraction towards males
18 to her classmates, her parents removed her from
19 school and revoked her access to social media.

20 In her suicide note Alcorn cited loneliness and
21 alienation as key reasons for her decision to end
22 her life and blamed her parents for causing these
23 feelings. She committed suicide by walking out in
24 front of oncoming traffic on the Interstate 71
25 highway.

1 Now speaking for myself as a gay kid, I began
2 suffering from suicidal ideation at the age of ten
3 without even exposure to conversion therapy.

4 So when you concentrate society's hatred and
5 this bigotry that we're already dealing with and
6 directing it at fixing LGBTQ Plus kids who are not
7 broken, you are destroying lives. And if you do not
8 stop it, we are all complicit in the physical and
9 psychological murder of our youth.

10 Thank you.

11 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
12 10:14 a.m. of DVD.)

13 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

14 Next, please.

15 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
16 10:14 a.m. of DVD.)

17 MR. PUSKARICH: Good morning, Council. Mark
18 Puskarich, 4201 Bayshore Boulevard.

19 I have a -- I'm with Equality Florida, and I
20 have a statement here that probably covers a lot
21 that you've already heard this morning, but thank
22 you for listening nonetheless. This is an official
23 statement from Equality Florida.

24 On behalf of Equality Florida, the state's
25 largest organization dedicated to ending

1 discrimination of the LGBT community, thank you for
2 bringing forward an ordinance to ban conversion
3 therapy in the City of Tampa.

4 Conversion therapy is a fraudulent, danger- --
5 conversion therapy is fraudulent, dangerous, and it
6 inflicts immeasurable harm on its victims. And we
7 applaud you for taking up this important issue.

8 So-called conversion therapy is a debunked
9 practice that purports to change a person's sexual
10 orientation or gender identity.

11 Also known as ex-gay therapy and sexual
12 orientation change efforts, such practices have been
13 decried and debunked by every mainstream medical and
14 mental health organization, including the American
15 Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric
16 Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

17 Not only is it ineffective in actually changing
18 a person's sexual orientation or gender identity; it
19 puts our young LGBTQ youth and their families at
20 risk. And yet partially because deep-seated
21 homophobia and transphobia still exist in our
22 society, the practice of conversion therapy
23 continues without any legal consequence.

24 Conversion therapy can be extremely dangerous
25 and in some cases fatal. Minors are especially

1 vulnerable to the dangers of conversion therapy,
2 which has been tragically proven to lead to
3 depression, anxiety, drug use, homelessness,
4 self-harm and suicide.

5 Research shows that lesbian, gay and bisexual
6 young adults who reported higher levels of family
7 rejection during adolescence were more than eight
8 times more likely to report having attempted
9 suicide, more than five times more likely to report
10 high levels of depression, and more than three times
11 more likely to use illegal drugs compared with their
12 peers.

13 According to the Centers for Disease Control
14 and Prevention, the two most important factors to
15 the wellbeing of an LGBTQ young person are family
16 acceptance and a supportive school environment.

17 While we can't always ensure that LGBTQ youth
18 are accepted and affirmed by their families, we can
19 and we must protect them from being subjected to
20 dishonest and dangerous abuse disguised as medical
21 treatment. LGBTQ youth deserve to grow up knowing
22 they are celebrated and valued for exactly who they
23 are.

24 Thank you, Commissioner Maniscalco, for seeking
25 to protect LGBT young people from harm. Please let

1 us know on behalf of Equality Florida how we can be
2 helpful in providing research, talking points or
3 legal analysis.

4 We look forward to working with you to ban the
5 practice of conversion therapy in the City of Tampa.
6 Thank you very much.

7 And just on a personal note, as somebody that
8 is a counselor for a national LGBT youth hotline,
9 these young people from all over the world come to
10 us with concerns about who they are. They thank
11 you, too, for considering this conversion therapy
12 ban.

13 Thank you very much.

14 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
15 10:17 a.m. of DVD.)

16 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

17 Next, please.

18 And before you go, sir, if there's anyone else
19 that wants to stand and speak, if you're able to
20 stand, if you could stand against the wall, either
21 wall -- it doesn't matter -- so we get a sense of
22 how much more time we have.

23 Sir, you're next.

24 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
25 10:17 a.m. of DVD.)

1 MR. ROLLINS: Pastor J Ricc Rollins, II, senior
2 lead servant of the Edge Community Church at
3 2705 East Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

4 I thought about what I would say, and this is
5 the first thing that came to mind.

6 In the moments where there was nothing said,
7 the silence becomes uncomfortable. In the moments
8 that nothing is said, we are forced to suffer in
9 silence.

10 Today you've heard what many people have had to
11 say. They've quoted statistics. Let me tell you my
12 story real quick.

13 At three years old I was molested. I was raped
14 at 15 and then again at 17, all by males. And when
15 I finally understood some things about me, I had to
16 ask myself, did I cause these?

17 At 19 I went to my mother, the very woman I put
18 here -- this woman -- and said to her, "I'm gay."

19 The question that she asked is, "Would you like
20 to get some help?"

21 Now, before you jump on my mother, my mother
22 said to me, "I want you to get help in being the
23 best person you can be. If that is your gay self,
24 then be gay. If it's just a phase, let's walk
25 through it together."

1 When we talk about conversion therapy, it is
2 not giving the child the option to grow and be.

3 After the therapy -- or no. Before the therapy
4 the reason she asked me that is because I tried to
5 kill myself twice.

6 And I think about that in this day and time at
7 54 years of age. I think about the fact that had I
8 not lived, there would be no one to take care of
9 that 90-year-old woman who today says,

10 "God could have changed you if he wanted to, but he
11 chose to leave you to be who you are. He could have
12 winked, blinked, snapped or blew, but he knew that
13 there was a cause and a purpose for you being just
14 as you are."

15 Today, my brothers and sister, in her absence I
16 say to you this. If children are not allowed to
17 live their lives with the freedom and honesty, then
18 the Bible is not true, because the Bible says, "And
19 they that know the truth must worship him in spirit
20 and truth and that that truth will set them free."

21 Today allow them to be free and live the life
22 in this United States of America that we so proudly
23 boast.

24 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
25 10:20 a.m. of DVD.)

1 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

2 Next, please.

3 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp

4 10:20 a.m. of DVD.)

5 MR. MUNOZ: My name is Aaron Munoz. I'm 27
6 years old. I'm a resident of New Port Richey, but
7 I -- I'm a frequent visitor and patron of Ybor City.

8 I work with LGBTQ youth as a volunteer
9 facilitator with Metro Health and Wellness, which is
10 located in St. Pete and Tampa.

11 I can tell you that those children are the most
12 intelligent, well-informed and self-aware kids I've
13 ever met. They've taught me a lot about myself and
14 the new language going on in the communities. And
15 as teens, they may be unsure of plenty, but they
16 know in their hearts exactly who they are.

17 I'm also the president of an advocacy group
18 organization called Out in Love Florida, and it
19 organizes LGBTQ events, who likes to think that
20 Tampa is a welcoming place in which we can do so.

21 Now, a bit about myself. I myself am a
22 transgender man, meaning that I was raised female,
23 but no friend or doctor today would ever tell you
24 that I'm anything but male in my heart or in my
25 soul.

1 My family was far from educated on LGBTQ
2 children, like most traditional families 20 years
3 ago. And it was clear from an early age that I
4 needed guidance. After all, what child doesn't?

5 But traditional values and outdated information
6 taught them that something was wrong with me.

7 Now, my parents could not afford a
8 run-of-the-mill therapist, let alone conversion
9 therapy, but they did do what they could on their
10 own to convert me.

11 I was conditioned every day to be anyone but
12 who I was. It started with things like clothes and
13 toys, throwing away blue and forcing pink, throwing
14 away blocks and forcing dolls, isolating me from
15 other children lest they encourage me to be myself.

16 I remember the summer I was sent to stay with
17 family and returned to find all of my clothes and
18 belongings discarded or destroyed with no regard for
19 sentimental value and replaced by a princess-themed
20 world that didn't fit, or for that matter, anyone I
21 knew.

22 I endured years of physical abuse at my
23 father's hand and countless hours of psychological
24 conditioning to teach me to be the little girl I
25 knew I wasn't. I spent sleepless nights forced to

1 read diaries out loud, forced to cut up my own
2 favorite clothes, forced to replay over and over a
3 confirmation that I would swear to stifle who I am.

4 I never did find my way into that forced
5 womanhood. Instead, by the age of 18 I had
6 attempted suicide four times, and I will live the
7 rest of my life with complex PTSD.

8 I could spend well over my allowed time
9 explaining the journey that brought a confident,
10 self-loving man before you here today. But what I
11 can tell you in my short time that I have left is
12 that no amount of brainwashing or abuse or
13 conditioning or peer pressure or anything along
14 those lines can change who a person is at their
15 core. It can't make them gay, it can't make them
16 trans, and it can't make them straight.

17 Suicide is the leading cause of death among
18 LGBTQ children, and I was almost one of them.
19 Breaking a child's spirit never leads to anything
20 good.

21 Please, do not legalize child abuse, and please
22 let my community know that we are safe and we are
23 welcome here in the City of Tampa where we spend our
24 money, where we raise our children and where we
25 spend our time.

1 Thank you very much.

2 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
3 10:23 a.m. of DVD.)

4 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

5 Next, please.

6 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
7 10:23 a.m. of DVD.)

8 MR. GAGNE: My name is Jake Gagne. Thank you
9 for listening to me today. I don't have anything
10 prepared, so forgive me if I'm winging it a little
11 bit here.

12 But I am a member of the LGBTQ Plus community.
13 I kissed a guy once, but it wasn't for me.

14 I'm here to show -- to tell you that this is
15 not just an issue for the LGBT community. This is
16 an issue for all of -- Tampanians, all of the people
17 that you represent.

18 When my gay friend told me that this was
19 happening at 8:20 this morning, I rolled out of bed,
20 did whatever I could to get here just to tell you
21 that the people of Tampa consider this an issue as
22 well, that this is important to everyone.

23 I've lived here for 22 years. I've been
24 organizing in my community through activism since I
25 was 17. I know the people who live here, young and

1 old, and I know that they will want you to ban this.
2 It is hurtful, it is cruel, and I don't see any
3 justification for it.

4 Thank you.

5 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
6 10:24 a.m. of DVD.)

7 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

8 Next, please.

9 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
10 10:24 a.m. of DVD.)

11 MS. ECHE: Hi. My name is Lynn Eche. I
12 identify as either queer or bisexual.

13 I didn't actually figure out my sexuality until
14 I was in my early 20s. But had I met the right
15 woman in high school, my life may have looked a lot
16 differently.

17 I did know somebody who was put through
18 conversion therapy in high school. He had grown up
19 in a Christian conservative household, put in a
20 private school that was very against being who he
21 was. And he was always very quiet and didn't really
22 spend any time talking to anyone.

23 When he came to high school in my school, that
24 was a secular Ivy-affiliated school, he changed
25 completely once he was able to be himself. He was

1 able to accept himself for who he was, and he became
2 this vibrant, outgoing personality.

3 That was until his senior year when his parents
4 read through his text messages and realized that he
5 was openly gay amongst his peer group in high
6 school.

7 They made him throw out all of his gay clothes.
8 They made him go to counsel with a church member who
9 would help him work through his feelings. And they
10 nearly kicked him out of the high school that he had
11 found a community in and his home.

12 He was able, by working through the church
13 group and pretending just to have the ability to
14 stay in high school, to put his head down and live a
15 double life and survive for his last year of high
16 school until he could go to college.

17 Now he's doing well. He doesn't have much of a
18 relationship with his family, but he was able to get
19 through it. But I wonder, for somebody who went
20 through something like that, had it happened before
21 their senior year when they had that light at the
22 end of the tunnel of being able to go away for
23 college if he had -- would have survived if it been
24 when he was younger in middle school or late high
25 school and he would have had to have suffered

1 through that double life for more than one year.

2 This happens to so many people all the time,
3 and I don't want to see people deal with the pain of
4 having to go through that double life. It's not
5 worth it.

6 Thank you.

7 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
8 10:26 a.m. of DVD.)

9 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am.

10 Next, please.

11 And before you speak, is there anyone that is
12 going to speak after -- I think the woman in the
13 glasses in the back there -- are you -- you're going
14 to speak, too. Correct?

15 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: I am.

16 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. Is there anyone else that
17 wants to speak? Please line up behind her -- and --
18 okay.

19 All right. Well, you're filming, so we can't
20 count you, can we?

21 Okay. Well, after -- after this young lady
22 right here with the bun on her head.

23 So if anybody wants to speak, please line up.

24 Yes, sir.

25 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp

1 10:27 a.m. of DVD.)

2 MR. O'HARE: Good morning. Kevin O'Hare.

3 4931 Copper Canyon Boulevard, Valrico, Florida.

4 Pardon me. I'm a little under the weather this
5 morning, however I did want to say some remarks
6 after I heard some pretty compelling and strong
7 stories from today's public comment.

8 So I'm feeling pretty old. I just recently
9 turned 20, but not too long ago I was in high school
10 in -- in our community, and I had a lot of friends
11 who struggled deeply with who they were, and who
12 they were was gay.

13 And after -- you know, day after day we'd go to
14 school, and they were afraid about not being
15 accepted for who they were, and it was
16 heart-wrenching as their friend to see them go
17 through with that, you know, having to wear a double
18 mask going through day after day with their family
19 and friends.

20 I grew up in a family where I was loved and
21 accepted for who I was. And from a very young age,
22 that's really all that we can ask for is to be loved
23 and accepted for who we really are, whatever that
24 is. Every child really deserves to have that
25 opportunity from their parents and from their family

1 members and their community and their schools, to
2 have that feeling of acceptance for who they really
3 are as a person.

4 And this resolution is really about telling all
5 of those kids, those who have come -- come out for
6 who they are or who are still in the shadows
7 wrenching with when is the right time to do it.

8 But they can be accepted and not be afraid of
9 the consequences, to be afraid of what could
10 actually happen and know that they're loved and
11 accepted for just who they are.

12 And the best way to live our lives is to have
13 our lives be as free as possible, and we can start
14 that today by letting a whole new group of people
15 know that they can be free in who they are by
16 passing this resolution.

17 Thank you.

18 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
19 10:28 a.m. of DVD.)

20 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

21 Next, please.

22 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
23 10:28 a.m. of DVD.)

24 MS. ESTES: Thank you to the council for taking
25 public comment. My name is Faith Estes, ZIP code

1 33609. And I'm speaking as a cisgender straight
2 woman.

3 I believe conversion therapy is cruel and
4 dangerous. It is psychological abuse and at times
5 physical abuse. It scars people for life. And as
6 mentioned earlier, it can create complex PTSD,
7 depression and increase suicide rates.

8 And to use conversion therapy on children who
9 are not yet of a legal age to consent, whose
10 psychological wellbeing and sense of self is still
11 formative, constitutes child abuse. End of story.

12 So I have a question for the council and anyone
13 possibly in the room. If you were straight, when
14 did you decide to be straight? Because I know that
15 I never did.

16 And what if someone told you that that wasn't
17 right? How would you handle someone using forcible
18 manipulation, using judgment, shaming and forcing
19 you to change who you are?

20 Abuse like this cannot be allowed to happen
21 ever, but especially not to our children, not now,
22 not ever. Thank you.

23 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
24 10:30 a.m. of DVD.)

25 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

1 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:30 a.m. of
2 DVD.)

3 (Meeting continues.)

4 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:36 a.m. of
5 DVD.)

6 MR. SUAREZ: Yes, ma'am. You are our final
7 speaker unless there's anyone else who wants to
8 speak after this time, please let me know.

9 But, Ms. Conley, you are next. Thank you.

10 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
11 10:36 a.m. of DVD.)

12 MS. CONLEY: Thank you, Chairman. And thank
13 you kindly, Council, for the opportunity to speak to
14 the ban on conversion therapy in minors. Special
15 thanks --

16 MR. SUAREZ: Give your name, though.

17 (Inaudible.)

18 MS. CONLEY: My name is Kate Conley, and I live
19 at 2035 Phillippe Parkway, Safety Harbor. It was
20 coming up.

21 Special thanks to Councilman Maniscalco and all
22 others here (inaudible) for equal human rights.

23 Also, special thanks to our only councilwoman,
24 Ms. Yvonne Yolie Capin, for introducing a domestic
25 partner registry and all of you for passing it.

1 My name is Kate Conley, and I'm a 26-year-old
2 lesbian who may be bisexual. I own a local
3 marketing company and do most of my business in my
4 favorite city: Tampa.

5 I am a representative of the Tampa Bay Sierra
6 Club, the Sunshine Citizens, the Hillsborough County
7 LGBT caucus and other local community service
8 organizations.

9 I'm not only queer, but I'm also Catholic,
10 which, combined with social norms of my youth, I
11 truly believed I could never come out of the closet,
12 especially if I intended to pursue a career in
13 politics.

14 Thankfully, society, the church and my own
15 family evolved, and I grew to believe I could be
16 myself publicly.

17 I hope all LGBT youth come to the same
18 realization and also fight for all human rights, as
19 I try to do so myself.

20 And I'm going to give you some facts. I think
21 you've already heard a lot of them, so sorry if
22 they're at all redundant.

23 But first off, LGBT people are more likely to
24 be targets of hate crimes than any other minority
25 group. That was a headline from "The Guardian" last

1 year.

2 As of 2014, LGBT people are twice as likely to
3 be targeted as African-Americans, and the rate of
4 hate crimes against them has surpassed that of
5 crimes against Jews.

6 "As the majority of society becomes more
7 tolerant as LGBT people, some of those who are
8 opposed to them become radical," said Mark
9 (inaudible), a senior fellow at the Southern Poverty
10 Law Center.

11 From Equality Florida I do believe you have
12 heard research shows that LGBT youth who have
13 reported higher levels of family rejection during
14 adolescence were more than eight times more likely
15 to have reported attempting suicide, more than five
16 times more likely to report high levels of
17 depression and more than three times more likely to
18 use illegal drugs compared with their peers.

19 It is a fraudulent, dangerous crime of
20 conversion therapy, and it inflicts immeasurable
21 harm.

22 Minors are especially vulnerable to the dangers
23 of conversion therapy, which has been tragically
24 proven to lead to depression, anxiety, drug use,
25 homelessness, self-harm and suicide.

1 Moreover, people who have gone through
2 conversion therapy face 8.9 times the rate of
3 suicide ideation and face depression at 5.9 times
4 the rate of their peers and are three times more
5 likely to use illegal drugs.

6 And that -- that hate doesn't just hurt them.
7 It affects all of us, especially the LGBT.

8 President Obama, and many other electeds like
9 you, officially came out against conversion therapy
10 after the tragic death of Leelah Alcorn, an Ohio
11 transgender teen, who, as you heard, committed
12 suicide after going through a version of conversion
13 therapy.

14 Lastly, all the progress we've worked so hard
15 for is to -- to be enjoyed by all members of our
16 community. That can't happen if still legal and
17 emotional trauma is affecting LGBT people by
18 rejecting who they are.

19 And from scripture, love is patient and love is
20 kind. Thank you.

21 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
22 10:39 a.m. of DVD.)

23 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

24 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:39 a.m. of
25 DVD.)

1 (Meeting continues.)

2 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 12:03 p.m. of
3 DVD.)

4 MR. SUAREZ: We have Items 78, 79 and 80.
5 Because we had people speak passionately about
6 Number 80, I would like to take that first, with
7 your permission, so that we can continue this
8 through and then get on to Items 78 and 79.

9 So I apologize to the staff who's here for 78
10 and 79.

11 Item Number 80, sir.

12 MR. MUELLER: Good afternoon, Council. Ernest
13 Mueller with the legal department. I'm here with
14 Jarrod Simpson and Item 80 where the council has
15 asked the legal department to prepare and present a
16 draft ordinance regarding conversion therapy to
17 minors.

18 We're going to be handing out that draft
19 ordinance to you at this time.

20 Similar ordinances have been passed in
21 communities in South Florida, and we're going to be
22 using the ordinance that was passed and enacted by
23 West Palm Beach as our model to this ordinance.

24 I want to go through just a few of the
25 highlights once you-all have them.

1 MR. SUAREZ: You can begin while we're passing
2 these out.

3 MR. MUELLER: Okay.

4 MR. SUAREZ: We -- we catch up pretty quick.

5 MR. MUELLER: All right. Great.

6 There are several "whereas" clauses that you're
7 going to find in the beginning. Those are going to
8 be your legislative findings, and enforcement is
9 going to start on Page 5.

10 We'll be placing this ordinance into
11 Chapter 14, which deals with offenses, and we're
12 going to be creating a new article, which is
13 Article X.

14 The definitions in this ordinance are
15 significant. At the bottom of Page 5 will be the
16 definition of what conversion therapy is, and at the
17 top of Page 6 is the definition of what a provider
18 is, who this will cover.

19 A violation of this ordinance will be enforced
20 through the code enforcement special magistrates.

21 And now an important change that we're making
22 in our ordinance that's going to be different from
23 the West Palm, and all the other ones that are in
24 South Florida, is that we are going to make this
25 violation an irreparable, irreversible violation.

1 That means once there's been a violation,
2 it's -- it's immediate. We're going to be citing
3 them immediately, and then it will be taken to the
4 code enforcement special magistrate as quickly as
5 possible.

6 Each instant -- each incident of a violation
7 will be treated as a separate violation.

8 And finally, the last part of that will be we
9 have to amend Chapter 19 to authorize our
10 neighborhood enhancement department to be the
11 enforcement arm of this ordinance.

12 MR. SUAREZ: Any questions or comments right
13 now to Mr. Mueller on this particular item?

14 Mr. Reddick.

15 MR. REDDICK: When we discuss this, we talk
16 about the penalty as far as fines. And I was
17 scanning through this.

18 Do you have this listed in --

19 MR. MUELLER: As I said, it's an irreparable,
20 irreversible violation. According to Florida
21 Statutes --

22 MR. REDDICK: Correct.

23 MR. MUELLER: -- 162, an irreparable,
24 irreversible violation is a fine up to \$15,000 for
25 each offense.

1 MR. REDDICK: Okay. And -- and the one --
2 (inaudible) West Palm Beach?

3 MR. MUELLER: The model -- yeah. We've
4 modeled -- by and large, the definitions are the
5 same one used in West Palm.

6 MR. REDDICK: (Inaudible.)

7 MR. MUELLER: Theirs was either 200 or 500.
8 Bear with me just a second.

9 MR. REDDICK: (Inaudible) who has discretion to
10 determine how much a person will be (inaudible)?

11 MR. MUELLER: That would be the code
12 enforcement special magistrate as it stands now.
13 However, if the city council would like to chime in
14 on that, we're still in a draft mode.

15 MR. REDDICK: All right. And -- and I, too,
16 would believe that when you say up to \$15,000 -- I
17 mean, a person has got the liberty to -- they can
18 take that judgment of 14,500.

19 I think we should have a limitation dollar fine
20 attached to this here.

21 You say West Palm is up to 500, 700?

22 MR. MUELLER: Theirs is \$250 for a first
23 violation and \$500 for a repeat.

24 MR. REDDICK: All right. And -- and I think we
25 should have something similar -- we should have

1 something similar to that language instead of just
2 saying up to \$15,000. I mean, that's -- that's my
3 opinion.

4 You give someone discretion to -- to say based
5 on what? What's the theory that they determine that
6 it's going to be 15,000 or it's going to be 12,000,
7 it's going to be 13-?

8 We should have some broad language in there
9 similar to what you was talking about the model down
10 in West Palm where the first offense or second
11 offense -- and similar to what we have in other
12 ordinances that we have put together when you say
13 first offense, second offense or third offense, this
14 amount, that amount.

15 But just to leave up to someone to make the
16 decision and say up to -- "You've got up to
17 \$15,000," I -- I -- I don't want someone to have to
18 make that decision, personally. That's me speaking.

19 I want us to maintain that model that we have
20 in other ordinances where we put a limitation there
21 where first offense \$100, first -- second offense
22 \$300. And we have done that.

23 And -- and -- and I'm not speaking to you.

24 MR. MUELLER: No. I know.

25 MR. REDDICK: But I'm just saying, from my

1 standpoint I feel more comfortable in doing -- doing
2 it that way versus just leaving it wide open:
3 "You've got up to 15,000." And that's my -- my
4 position on this.

5 And I can be supportive of this if we put that
6 type of language into this -- this ordinance.

7 MR. SUAREZ: Ms. Capin.

8 MS. CAPIN: Yes. Thank you for that. I tend
9 to agree with that.

10 I want to know -- the number 15,000 -- if we
11 modeled it after West Palm and they have a 250/500,
12 where did we come up with 15-?

13 MR. MUELLER: Well, what we did -- what we
14 thought was important here was more of the
15 irreparable/irreversible part, not about the
16 penalty.

17 Normally code violations are such that if
18 someone violates the code, then they are given a
19 notice and an opportunity to cure. And then we --
20 they come back and see if they're still violating.

21 MS. CAPIN: Yes, sir.

22 MR. MUELLER: And we didn't want to follow that
23 process. In order to avoid that process was the
24 irreparable/irreversible aspect.

25 What the statute of Chapter 162 says, which

1 governs that, is saying that in an
2 irreparable/irreversible --

3 MS. CAPIN: Okay.

4 MR. MUELLER: -- a fine is up to 15,000.

5 MS. CAPIN: All right.

6 MR. MUELLER: So -- but again, this is all to
7 the pleasure of how -- how the city council wants
8 to --

9 MS. CAPIN: I (inaudible) first offense, but it
10 needs to be painful. It needs to hurt their
11 pocketbook. So we need to come up with a number
12 more than 200 and 500. I mean, they're -- some of
13 these organizations are worth millions.

14 And so -- this, I know, was brought up by
15 Mr. -- Councilman Maniscalco. But as -- as a -- you
16 know, myself, personal witness to this kind of
17 treatment for gay and lesbians, it is -- and I like
18 the term. What is it, irreversible?

19 MR. MUELLER: Irreparable/irreversible.

20 MS. CAPIN: I like that term very much.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. SUAREZ: Mr. Miranda.

23 MR. MIRANDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Mr. Mueller, you and I discussed some of the
25 things and some of the happenings regarding this a

1 couple of days ago and so forth.

2 And when you said this is modeled after the
3 Palm Beach --

4 MR. MUELLER: West Palm Beach.

5 MR. MIRANDA: -- West Palm Beach, have you
6 looked at other cities that have a modeling?

7 MR. MUELLER: Yes. We've looked at -- we've
8 got Miami, Miami Beach.

9 MR. MIRANDA: What do they have regarding what
10 Mr. Reddick was speaking about?

11 MR. MUELLER: Penalty-wise?

12 Bear with me just a second.

13 MR. MIRANDA: Just for the conversation.

14 MR. MUELLER: Sorry about that on the
15 microphone.

16 Miami is \$500. Miami Beach is \$200.

17 MR. MIRANDA: Higher -- higher living area and
18 less money.

19 MR. MUELLER: And the other community we have
20 here is Wilton Manors and -- which I think is down
21 in the Fort Lauderdale area.

22 MR. MIRANDA: Just outside of Miami.

23 MR. MUELLER: And theirs is also \$200.

24 MR. MIRANDA: Another high-class area.

25 Let me say this. And I'm sure you talked to

1 attorneys in -- in all these cities.

2 And how many of these have actually gone before
3 a magistrate or whatever? I don't know. I'm
4 asking.

5 MR. MUELLER: I have had the opportunity to
6 talk to Miami and West Palm Beach, and so far they
7 had not been -- had not brought a case at all yet.
8 But again, these are, you know, relatively new
9 ordinances.

10 MR. MIRANDA: I understand.

11 All right. That's all I needed to know right
12 now.

13 MR. SUAREZ: Mr. Cohen.

14 MR. COHEN: Thank you.

15 Let me start off by saying I -- I agree with my
16 colleagues about the certainty of whatever the fine
17 is going to be.

18 As a matter of fact, I -- I would -- I would
19 consider it a weakness of this ordinance if we
20 passed it and it -- it allowed anywhere zero to
21 \$15,000 and we ended up in a situation where there
22 were very inconsistent rulings made against people.
23 I think that would -- that would probably weaken
24 the -- the ordinance.

25 I just wanted to -- so I'm -- I'm totally in

1 support of doing that at whatever number you-all
2 think is appropriate, and I tend to agree it should
3 be on the higher rather than the lower side.

4 This ordinance only governs licensed healthcare
5 providers. Correct?

6 MR. MUELLER: Yes.

7 MR. COHEN: So I think it's important to point
8 out that, first of all, clergy are not -- are not
9 covered by it if they're acting in their role as a
10 clergy person?

11 MR. MUELLER: Correct. As long as they're not
12 holding themselves out -- right.

13 MR. COHEN: But there's someone else -- there's
14 another group of people that are not covered by it,
15 and that is just quacks that are out there who are
16 unlicensed, you know, people that hold themselves
17 out as doing this kind of work even though they have
18 no professional credentials at all.

19 So, you know --

20 MR. MIRANDA: What are you looking at us for?

21 MR. COHEN: I only -- I only point that out
22 because, you know, the -- the people who we are
23 intending to hit with this may have a loophole that
24 they can crawl through, which is that they're not
25 actually licensed providers.

1 So we may want to think in the future of how we
2 could strengthen this by trying to corral that --
3 that population under this -- under the ordinance as
4 well.

5 So that -- but I -- I am going to vote in
6 support of it, but I just -- I -- I wanted to point
7 that out because my guess is that the -- the -- the
8 individuals that are providing this -- this -- I
9 don't want to call it a service. I'm not even sure
10 what to call it. But they're probably likely not to
11 be licensed therapists and, like I said, they're
12 licensed to -- you know, they're -- they're liable
13 just to be people holding themselves out there just
14 like tarot card readers or something.

15 MR. SUAREZ: Or lawyers.

16 MR. COHEN: No. I -- I don't agree with that.
17 Lawyers are not in that. Lawyers are regulated by
18 the Florida Bar and so are --

19 MR. MIRANDA: Mr. Cohen, I guess you can buy
20 insurance against it.

21 MR. SUAREZ: That's true. And I'll be glad to
22 sell it to him, too.

23 Mr. Maniscalco, if you want to go next, and
24 then Mr. Viera.

25 MR. MANISCALCO: Well, in regards to the fines

1 in order to set a cap, perhaps \$1,000 for the first
2 violation and then 5,000 for the second.

3 As something Councilwoman Capin has said, it
4 has to hurt. You know, if they don't learn their
5 lesson at 1,000, you know, 5,000 is -- is pretty
6 significant. I know it's more than the other
7 cities, but I think it sends a stronger message.
8 And that's -- that's it for now.

9 MR. SUAREZ: Mr. Viera.

10 MR. VIERA: I just wanted to commend you guys.
11 You know, we talked about this a few days ago, and
12 this looks like a very good ordinance. Obviously,
13 we've just gotten it, including on some of the
14 things that we discussed. So thank you for that.

15 Something I think we discussed was the issue of
16 under-enforcement when it comes to the minor or the
17 victim.

18 What -- what role, just out of curiosity, would
19 proving the case take whenever it comes to
20 involvement of the minor or the victim, if we know
21 that at this time?

22 MR. MUELLER: You know, we've had some talks on
23 that and -- as far as the evidentiary issues. And
24 we would -- since we are with the code enforcement
25 special magistrate, we'll have a little bit of a

1 relaxed evidentiary issue.

2 But also, keep in mind we do have, you know,
3 especially now, the 1,000 and \$5,000 penalty. We do
4 have to have at least, you know, a good evidentiary
5 basis for a finding. But it would more than likely
6 require either testimony, and we are looking into
7 the idea of perhaps an affidavit, but -- of the
8 person that went through the therapy.

9 MR. VIERA: Thank you.

10 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. Everyone has spoken.

11 Ms. Capin.

12 MS. CAPIN: (Inaudible) the person that went
13 through the therapy, which would be the minor --

14 MR. MUELLER: Yes.

15 MS. CAPIN: -- as opposed to the parent that
16 gave permission for that minor to get that therapy?

17 MR. MUELLER: Yeah. That's going to be our
18 strongest case. It's going to be -- you know, and
19 we've talked about that and we're -- we're trying to
20 deal with those evidentiary issues.

21 MS. CAPIN: Okay.

22 MR. MUELLER: We know that we will have some
23 evidentiary issues. Let's not kid ourselves here.

24 MR. SUAREZ: I -- I want to make a comment
25 about the --

1 Yes, sir. Go ahead.

2 MR. MIRANDA: No. I was going to say it's my
3 second go-around. Just two things.

4 As you well know, when this first came up, I
5 said, "I'm not going to vote anything until I see
6 something."

7 And I see this. And I had further discussion
8 with yourself and listening to the council speak --
9 and I'm not anti-insurance or anti-attorneys -- or
10 maybe. But --

11 MR. SUAREZ: We know you're anti-insurance.

12 MR. MIRANDA: Well, I -- I carry my own
13 insurance policy.

14 And -- and what it is, is that I've heard many
15 figures regarding the fine, and 15,000 was never
16 mentioned as an alternative. It was mentioned 500
17 or 1,000 and 5,000 or something like that.

18 And if I might just throw it out, 500, 1,000
19 and then jumps to 15,000. That would be just my
20 idea. Maybe not proper, but I'm just asking the
21 council to consider that.

22 And after speaking with you and -- and checking
23 what the other cities have done and seeing what
24 the -- the results have been, it's been, I guess, a
25 deterrent because I haven't seen anybody going to

1 court yet to try it out, or magistrate. So I will
2 support it whenever it comes up.

3 MR. MUELLER: Thank you.

4 MR. SUAREZ: Mr. Mueller, you know, because you
5 mentioned that the type of enforcement mechanism
6 we're going to use is -- and I've got to -- I've got
7 to get it right now. Say it again. It is
8 irreparable and --

9 MR. MUELLER: Irreversible and irreparable.

10 MR. SUAREZ: Irreversible and irreparable.

11 In my mind, if you're going to look at
12 penalties for this, it should be a -- a designation
13 up to a certain amount as opposed to a first offense
14 and second offense, because once the first offense
15 happens there is no chance for a second offense
16 according to what you described that process to be
17 essentially, meaning that unlike -- you know, you
18 had mentioned that they would go to a hearing
19 master, maybe have some cure to what their violation
20 was.

21 There is none of that in this. So my
22 suggestion -- and I wanted to get your opinion
23 about -- couldn't you put a limitation as to the
24 total amount, meaning you get -- you get fined for
25 this? You -- the -- the person doing the -- the --

1 I guess the hearing master or whoever else that has
2 to go through the evidentiary procedure to make sure
3 that they are -- they have violated our ordinance,
4 that they cannot go above a certain amount.

5 So let's say 5,000 is the most that it could
6 be. Is that a better way of doing it since -- you
7 know, there's -- we're not curing something, so
8 we're not -- it's not a stage of violation. It's
9 one violation. You're caught. You're going to pay
10 something if we find the evidentiary findings to say
11 you have violated it.

12 MR. MUELLER: I think first, if I'm
13 understanding part of what your -- what your
14 understanding of irreparable/irreversible is, I kind
15 of think I want to clarify that.

16 MR. SUAREZ: I know. Because I'm listening to
17 you. I want to make sure I've got it right.

18 MR. MUELLER: It could be repeated. Another --
19 let's -- let's take it down to a different example
20 of what an irreparable/irreversible violation is.

21 Watering your lawn. If you watered it on the
22 wrong day, that's considered an irreparable,
23 irreversible violation. And you could do it several
24 times. Likewise here.

25 So -- and -- and I thought I understood you to

1 think that there's a one and only one time because
2 it's irreparable and irreversible.

3 MR. SUAREZ: No. My point is, is that I think
4 you send the wrong signal when you have a tiered
5 system of violation as opposed to an "up to"
6 whatever that violation is.

7 You may have someone that, unfortunately, has
8 gotten wrong information, even though they're a
9 professional, that has done this gay -- this
10 conversion therapy treatment and then realizes, "Oh,
11 my God. I can't believe I did this."

12 I can't imagine somebody doing it, but there
13 may be someone out there that will do that. They
14 pay the fine. That's it. They're not -- they're
15 not going to do it again, let's say.

16 But there may be someone out there that, you
17 know, says, "You know what. I'll do it again.
18 \$100, \$200, \$500, even \$5,000."

19 They'll -- they may think that they can keep
20 coming back because they have more evidence on their
21 side to protect themselves.

22 I would rather see, "Listen, here's the limit
23 you're going to be at." It's up to the evidentiary
24 finding, because I think it will strengthen our
25 enforcement in the long run because now they have a

1 right to come forward, but at the same time they
2 have to prove they haven't violated this -- this
3 ordinance.

4 And to me, I think that's the strength of it
5 because I don't think that anybody out there that's
6 holding themselves out to doing this type of
7 conversion therapy will have any strength of
8 argument. So let's try and make it as strong as
9 possible.

10 I would like to see it up to \$5,000. Let
11 the -- the hearing master make that decision as the
12 evidence presents itself.

13 MR. MUELLER: And you said 5,000 for each and
14 every violation?

15 MR. SUAREZ: Correct. So that -- and that
16 way that they -- you know, if we are not going to --
17 I don't think that we're going to come into any kind
18 of conflict with any of the state laws concerning
19 this if we give that opportunity to them to make the
20 evidentiary finding of fact as to whether or not
21 they did it.

22 That's the way I look at it. Because I think
23 that if we do first offense \$500, second offense
24 \$1,500, something like that, I think that it lends
25 itself to, you know, "I'll keep trying to, you know,

1 skirt a little bit until I get to where it's at."

2 But if every single time it's up to the
3 evidence that's provided, I think that they're going
4 to find it's going to be much more difficult for
5 them to keep -- to prove it.

6 I will go with Mr. Reddick first and then
7 Ms. Capin.

8 MR. REDDICK: Well -- well, I -- I hate to
9 disagree with that assumption that you just have
10 outlined, and here's the reason why.

11 Mr. Mueller has stated to us our ordinance
12 that -- that he reviewed. None of them had "up to."
13 They had one phase, second phase, and from Miami and
14 Miami-Dade, Palm Beach. None of them had "up to" a
15 certain dollar amount.

16 And I think, you know -- because I believe if
17 someone had done this more than twice or three
18 times, they deserve to be in jail somewhere, and --
19 and we should be enforcing this matter going to
20 court or putting them in jail. They need to be
21 locked up somewhere.

22 But I agree that the -- that the fine needs to
23 be substantial and -- and -- and -- and -- and --
24 and -- and I think we're stepping out of our
25 boundaries when we start looking at all our previous

1 ordinances that we have on the book. We have these
2 phases.

3 And -- and -- and I just think -- and I think
4 Mr. Cohen stated it properly when he said
5 maintaining that -- that standard. And -- and --
6 and I just, you know, just think that we'd be better
7 off if we're able to put this Phase 1 or 2 or 3.
8 And if they're --

9 And -- and the last thing I would say is this.
10 With this going on in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach --
11 and -- and -- and we don't have no history because
12 there have not been any case -- case brought to
13 court. So we don't have no history of how the
14 outcome and all these things happen, and we're
15 facing it in Tampa. And -- and I think we are
16 better off if we -- we stay in that phase state of
17 1, 2, 3, or whatever it is.

18 And I agree with Mr. Maniscalco. I don't -- I
19 don't agree that you start at 1,000 and then jump
20 all the way to 15,000 or 5,000.

21 But I think we can -- we can -- we can work out
22 the dollar amount and -- and make it substantial for
23 anyone who commits this -- I call it a crime here --
24 and be punished for it. But I -- I -- I can support
25 "up to," but I can't support the three phases.

1 MR. SUAREZ: If I could. You know, and let me
2 just explain why I asked for that.

3 To the form that it was presented to us in
4 terms of a -- what he was presenting, there's
5 nothing wrong with what that form is, and there's
6 nothing wrong with putting it "up to."

7 Again, they have to provide evidence to show
8 that they didn't do this. And if you want to do it
9 the other way, that's fine too.

10 I think that you're going to find that people
11 that want to do this are going to be able to do it
12 if we put a limit as opposed to having to put
13 evidence before us to say that, "This is why I'm
14 able to do it."

15 Now, that's just my statement on that. I think
16 that that would make it stronger. It is up to the
17 council in terms of what they think it makes
18 stronger.

19 I'm fine either way. The fines can be stronger
20 and then higher. But in terms of what I think I'm
21 going to see in the future -- if any of these cases
22 come forward, that's what I think is going to
23 happen.

24 And no disrespect to you, Mr. Reddick. But I
25 do think that because he represented it that way,

1 it's a little bit different than any of the other
2 ordinances we have because we're not trying to cure
3 a situation. We're trying to punish for a
4 situation.

5 That's all I have to say. I'm done.

6 Ms. -- Ms. Capin.

7 MS. CAPIN: However we do it for watering the
8 lawn. If you water the lawn on the wrong day, you
9 get punished, period. Okay. So that's already --
10 that's already being done.

11 Now, the --

12 MR. MUELLER: But that's not up to 15,000.

13 MS. CAPIN: Huh? No. Not 15-.

14 MR. MUELLER: (Inaudible.)

15 MS. CAPIN: But the thing is, is the argument
16 is that --

17 MR. MUELLER: Yeah.

18 MS. CAPIN: -- there is -- okay.

19 So going to the tier system and saying that it
20 is 500, 1,000, 15,000, 5,000 -- and it stays there.
21 You -- you violate a fourth time, it's 5,000.
22 Whatever time, you're going to be paying 5,000 or
23 15- every single time you come. The first and
24 second and third. That's it. Correct? So that
25 that fine will stay at the higher -- at the highest

1 level after -- if there's a fourth violation?

2 MR. MUELLER: Correct. I was thinking --
3 just -- the first suggestion that came was the 1,000
4 and 5,000.

5 MS. CAPIN: Correct.

6 MR. MUELLER: I had written it down here that
7 it would be 1,000 for a first violation and 5,000
8 for a second and subsequent violations.

9 MS. CAPIN: Okay.

10 MR. MUELLER: But that was just, again, a
11 suggestion. It's nothing you guys --

12 MS. CAPIN: That seems to be pretty painful.

13 (Inaudible.)

14 MS. CAPIN: Yeah. That's a lot of money.

15 MR. SUAREZ: All right. Any other council
16 members have to speak at this time?

17 Okay. I need a motion to have this come back
18 as an -- as an ordinance.

19 Mr. Maniscalco -- I was going to say,
20 Mr. Maniscalco, if you want to go ahead and make
21 that motion --

22 MR. MANISCALCO: Yes, sir.

23 MR. SUAREZ: -- to have the legal department
24 come back with an ordinance including some of the
25 language that we've been talking about here.

1 MR. MANISCALCO: Oh, okay.

2 MR. SUAREZ: All right?

3 I think that Mr. -- Mr. Mueller had already
4 mentioned one example of the violation amounts that
5 we would have. So if you want to include that in
6 there, you being the maker of the motion, it's up to
7 you, sir.

8 MR. MANISCALCO: Then I'd like to make a motion
9 that this be brought back for first reading at our
10 next regularly-scheduled meeting, which is
11 March 16th, and the fine tier system be 1,000 for
12 first violation and 5,000 for second and --

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Any subsequent.

14 MR. MANISCALCO: -- subsequent. Exactly.

15 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. We have a motion from
16 Mr. Maniscalco. We have a second from Mr. Cohen.

17 All in favor of that motion, please indicate by
18 saying "aye."

19 (MULTIPLE VOICES: Aye.)

20 MR. SUAREZ: Any opposed?

21 MR. MUELLER: Thank you, Council.

22 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you. All right.

23 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 12:28 p.m. of
24 DVD.)

25 (Meeting continues.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH)

I, Michele Coburn, FPR, Stenographic Shorthand Reporter, Notary Public, State of Florida, CERTIFY that I was authorized to and did stenographically transcribe the foregoing proceedings from March 2, 2017, from a DVD-recorded proceeding; and that the transcript is a true and complete record to the best of my ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the attorneys or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 8th day of January, 2018.

Michele Coburn

MICHELE COBURN, FPR
Stenographic Shorthand Reporter
Notary Public, State of Florida

IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING on 03/16/2017

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IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

STENOGRAPHICALLY TRANSCRIBED VIA DVD

EXCERPTS OF
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE TAKEN: MARCH 16, 2017
TIME: 9:34 A.M.
PLACE: TAMPA CITY HALL
315 EAST KENNEDY BOULEVARD
THIRD FLOOR
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33602
TRANSCRIBED BY: MICHELE COBURN, FPR

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TAMPA CITY COUNCIL:

17

MIKE SUAREZ, CHAIRMAN

18

CHARLIE MIRANDA

19

YVONNE YOLIE CAPIN

20

HARRY COHEN

21

FRANK REDDICK

22

GUIDO MANISCALCO

23

LUIS VIERA

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 9:34 a.m. of DVD.)

3 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. Next up on our agenda is
4 public comment. Public comment is reserved for
5 those items that are on the agenda except -- except
6 for Items 43 through 47. Those are set for a public
7 hearing later on this morning.

8 So even those that -- concerning the gay
9 conversion therapy and some other issues, now is the
10 time to speak on those issues. All other issues are
11 up on the agenda except for Item Numbers 43 through
12 47.

13 Please come forward. You have three minutes.

14 MR. COHEN: Good morning. If you will just
15 line up on either side. Whoever is first can go
16 ahead and come to the podium.

17 Go ahead, please.

18 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:35 a.m.
19 of DVD.)

20 MR. HOWELL: Thank you for having me.

21 I'm Gary Howell. I'm a clinical psychologist
22 here in Tampa. My address is 1506 North 15th Street
23 in Tampa.

24 I'm -- I'm a clinical psychologist and I work
25 primarily with LGBT patients, and I have an

1 expertise in this area as well as with multicultural
2 and diversity competency.

3 I have presented on topics related to LGBT
4 treatment, transgender-affirming healthcare, as well
5 as working with trans people in the prison and
6 correctional settings, at both local, national and
7 international conferences.

8 I'd first like to address some of the material
9 referenced in the Agenda Item Number 50.

10 (Inaudible) sources are a mixture of junk science
11 issued by anti-gay groups that are supporting
12 reparative therapy efforts. And peer-reviewed and
13 legitimate science was quoted out of context or
14 parsed together in a way that supports such false
15 claims, a common strategy that's often used by
16 anti-gay groups to reinforce their claims about LGB
17 people.

18 In fact, we have many years of research that's
19 available by credible scientific organizations who
20 have many peer-reviewed articles reviewing this
21 alleged scientific research. This hate, bigotry and
22 fear-mongering is at its finest in this example.

23 Studies cited regarding same-sex parenting were
24 also proved to be methodologically flawed, yet
25 presented factual.

1 I have worked with and treated several hundred
2 LGBT patients thus far in my career, and I have seen
3 the devastating effects of sexual orientation change
4 efforts, also known as reparative therapy, also
5 known as conversion therapy.

6 Every patient who has shared their experience
7 with me has also experienced at some point, either
8 during or after that treatment, an increase of
9 suicidal ideation or attempt. And this is
10 documented time and time again through research,
11 through peer-view journals, et cetera.

12 I do not use the word "homosexual" as many do
13 to describe the LGB community because it is a term
14 that is a medical term used to describe LGB
15 individuals in a way to pathologize, demoralize,
16 marginalize, discriminate and even terrorize LGB
17 patients and individuals.

18 It was removed from the DSM in 1973. Thus, we
19 should not be using it today.

20 The APA also advises parents and young people
21 and their families to avoid engaging in sexual
22 orientation change efforts because we know that
23 those efforts do not work.

24 Other states like Illinois, New Jersey,
25 California, Oregon, Vermont and the District of

1 Columbia have passed laws to prevent licensed mental
2 health practitioners from engaging in conversion
3 therapy.

4 And I urge you today -- we live in a beautiful
5 city, a diverse city -- let's be on the right side
6 of history. Please vote to ban conversion therapy
7 and its dangerous implications. A vote not to do so
8 means more suicides are likely among LGBT youth,
9 where already 40 to 50 percent in many states are
10 higher -- at higher risk of committing suicide and
11 actually completing their suicide.

12 Thank you for your time.

13 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
14 9:38 a.m. of DVD.)

15 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 9:38 a.m. of
16 DVD.)

17 (Meeting continues.)

18 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 9:43 a.m. of DVD.)

19 MR. SUAREZ: Next, please.

20 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:43 a.m.
21 of DVD.)

22 MR. KEMPLE: My name is Terry Kemple.

23 2312 Cherry Ridge Lane, Brandon, Florida.

24 Mr. Chairman, first, I'd like to thank you for
25 responding to my email at the meeting last month.

1 MR. SUAREZ: You're welcome.

2 MR. KEMPLE: I want to say that the law that
3 you're considering banning, conversion therapy,
4 presupposes that homosexuality is an innate,
5 unchangeable characteristic. There's no scientific
6 evidence to support that position.

7 The American Psychological Association, in
8 their statement on the causes of homosexuality, says
9 there is no consensus among scientists about the
10 exact reasons that an individual develops a
11 heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian orientation.

12 Although much research has examined the
13 possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social
14 and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no
15 findings have emerged that permit scientists to
16 conclude that sexual orientation is determined by
17 any particular factor or factors.

18 Many think that nature and nurture both play
19 complex roles. Most people experience little or no
20 sense of choice about their sexual orientation.

21 I want to remind you that at the meeting last
22 month two gentlemen, who are among the thousands
23 that have changed sexual orientation, have left the
24 homosexual lifestyle. One of them -- David -- lets
25 you know that he was celebrating his third

1 wedding -- his third anniversary of marriage to his
2 wife.

3 I just want to say that if you pass this law,
4 you're going to be robbing young people who are
5 experiencing unwanted same-sex attractions from the
6 right to have professional counseling to help them
7 achieve the objective that they desire, which is to
8 escape from unwanted sexual attractions.

9 So where the stated purpose is to protect young
10 people from the evil conversion therapists, the
11 reality is that what you're going to be doing is
12 robbing young people who choose to seek help to
13 change their sexual orientation from their
14 opportunity to have that experience.

15 Thank you very much for your time.

16 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
17 9:45 a.m. of DVD.)

18 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

19 Next, please, on -- on this side. Sir.

20 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:45 a.m.
21 of DVD.)

22 MR. PUSKARICH: Council, good morning. My name
23 is Mark Puskarich, 4201 Bayshore Boulevard, with
24 Equality Florida, and I have a statement I would
25 like to read for you-all.

1 On behalf of Equality Florida, the state's
2 largest organization dedicated to ending
3 discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual
4 and transgender community, thank you for bringing
5 forward an ordinance to ban conversion therapy in
6 the City of Tampa.

7 Conversion therapy is fraudulent, dangerous and
8 inflicts immeasurable harm on its victims, and we
9 applaud you and your colleagues for bringing up this
10 important issue.

11 So-called reparative therapy is a debunked
12 practice that purports to change a person's sexual
13 orientation or gender identity. Also known as
14 ex-gay therapy and sexual orientation change
15 efforts, such practices have been decried and
16 debunked by every mainstream medical and mental
17 health organization, including the American
18 Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric
19 Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

20 Not only is it ineffective in actually changing
21 a person's sexual orientation or gender identity; it
22 puts LGBTQ youth and their families at risk.

23 And yet, partially because deep-seated
24 homophobia and transphobia still exist in our
25 society, the practice of conversion therapy

1 continues without any legal consequence.

2 Conversion therapy can be extremely dangerous
3 and in some cases fatal. Minors are especially
4 vulnerable to the dangers of conversion therapy,
5 which has been tragically proven to lead to
6 depression, anxiety, drug use, homelessness,
7 self-harm and suicide.

8 Research shows that lesbian, gay and bisexual
9 young adults reported higher levels of family
10 rejection during adolescence were more than eight
11 times more likely than their peers to report having
12 attempted suicide, more than five times more likely
13 to have high levels of depression and more than
14 three times more likely to use illegal drugs.

15 According to the Centers for Disease Control
16 and Prevention, the two most important factors
17 contributing to the wellbeing of an LGBTQ young
18 person are family acceptance and a supportive school
19 environment.

20 While we can't always ensure that LGBTQs are
21 accepted and affirmed by their families, we can and
22 we must protect them from being subjected to
23 dishonest and dangerous abuse disguised as medical
24 treatment. LGBTQ youth deserve to grow up knowing
25 they are celebrated and valued for exactly who they

1 are.

2 Thank you, Commissioner Maniscalco, for
3 bringing -- for seeking to protect LGBTQ young
4 people from harm. Please let us know as an
5 organization -- Equality Florida -- if we can help
6 in providing you research, talking points or legal
7 analysis.

8 We look forward to working with you to ban the
9 practice of conversion therapy in the City of Tampa.

10 Thank you, Council.

11 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
12 9:48 a.m. of DVD.)

13 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

14 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 9:48 a.m. of
15 DVD.)

16 (Meeting continues.)

17 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 9:51 a.m. of DVD.)

18 MR. SUAREZ: This side, please. Next.

19 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:51 a.m.
20 of DVD.)

21 MR. SANTELLA: Good morning, City Council
22 Members. My name is Carlos Santella. I live at
23 6204 Paddock Glen Drive.

24 The reason I'm here is to support Agenda Item
25 Number 50, the ban on conversion therapy for minor

1 children.

2 I am a single -- I am a -- I'm a married father
3 of five -- five children. I could not see myself
4 subjecting my children to this type of therapy.
5 I've done some research and it could be cruel.

6 The therapy that's used -- it's either the
7 Bible or the belt for some of these locations.
8 Therefore, that's why I support the ban on
9 conversion therapy. Thank you.

10 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
11 9:52 a.m. of DVD.)

12 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

13 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 9:52 a.m. of
14 DVD.)

15 (Meeting continues.)

16 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 9:55 a.m. of DVD.)

17 MR. SUAREZ: Next, please.

18 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp 9:55 a.m.
19 of DVD.)

20 MR. PATTERSON: Good morning. I'm Russ
21 Patterson. 8701 Elmdale Place.

22 I'm speaking on behalf -- or actually reading a
23 statement from my minister, Reverend Patricia Owen,
24 who, like me, is an Air Force veteran and also was
25 raised Southern Baptist.

1 "A short introduction. I wear several hats.
2 Today I come to you as an ordained minister in the
3 Unitarian Universalist tradition. My master's of
4 divinity was granted in 2014 from Meadville Lombard
5 Theological School.

6 "I come to you as a veteran, having retired
7 from the Air Force after 22 1/2 years of service to
8 our country. I come to you as a lesbian who knows
9 beyond a shadow of a doubt that God don't make no
10 junk.

11 "I want to first thank the council for having
12 the courage to speak out against conversion therapy.
13 Speaking out against fear and hatred against the
14 perpetuation of (inaudible) is an important an
15 much-needed stand.

16 "I want to share an unrelated fact from the
17 history of mental health treatment here in the
18 United States. At one time an appropriate treatment
19 for autism was the use of stun guns on children to
20 correct their erratic body movements.

21 "If that makes any of you cringe, then the
22 barbaric methods behind conversion therapy should
23 make you cringe as well. Beatings, humiliation,
24 sexual torment: all praiseworthy, all inhumane.

25 "Fact: all of -- all of the nation's leading

1 professional, medical and mental health associations
2 have rejected conversion therapy as unnecessary,
3 ineffective and dangerous.

4 "Looking back over the history of this country,
5 you may well have at another time voted to stand up
6 for the right for women to vote. You may well ...
7 stood up to vote against slavery, the buying and
8 selling of people in a time when they were viewed as
9 less than human.

10 "You may well have voted to stand against a
11 number of myths, dangerous myths largely perpetuated
12 by the unfortunate manipulation of the Hebrew
13 scriptures and the New Testament.

14 "I am amazed and saddened at how frightened we
15 are of one another. I am dismayed that a city
16 council in 2017 must listen to a hollow, misinformed
17 defense of conversion therapy, which boils down to
18 paranoia. I am puzzled by the amount of time that
19 those identifying as heterosexuals spend thinking
20 about homosexuality.

21 "In taking a stand against conversion therapy,
22 you are fulfilling your promise and responsibility
23 to protect all the people of Tampa. You do not take
24 an oath to protect some. You do not take an oath to
25 perpetuate hatred.

1 "You have taken an oath and you have promised
2 to protect everyone. Thank you for your time and
3 service. The Reverend Patricia Owen, United States
4 Air Force, retired."

5 Thank you.

6 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
7 9:58 a.m. of DVD.)

8 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

9 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 9:58 a.m. of
10 DVD.)

11 (Meeting continues.)

12 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:01 a.m. of
13 DVD.)

14 MR. SUAREZ: Next, please.

15 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
16 10:01 a.m. of DVD.)

17 MS. JAMES: Good morning. I'm Cathy James.
18 11803 Ross Main Drive Riverview, Florida.

19 Although I live out in the county, I do work,
20 play and worship here in the City of Tampa. And I
21 want to thank you so much for Item Number 50, Guido
22 Maniscalco. Thank you so much for bringing this
23 forward.

24 And thank you, Yolie Capin, for your leadership
25 in the past in regard to a domestic partnership

1 registry. I still have my -- my registry card that
2 I carry with me at all times right next to my
3 marriage certificate.

4 MS. CAPIN: Excellent.

5 MS. JAMES: I wanted to thank you for your
6 leadership. I also wanted to set the record
7 straight a little bit.

8 Mr. Kemple referenced two people that came
9 forward two weeks ago to speak against putting this
10 ban in. That is incorrect. No one came forward two
11 weeks ago to object to placing this ban, and I just
12 wanted to make sure that that was on the record.

13 In addition, I want to make sure that everyone
14 understands that he makes his living on the backs of
15 not only my family --

16 MR. SUAREZ: If I can interrupt for just a
17 second. Just talk about what you want us to do.
18 We're not going to make this about one individual or
19 any other group of people. Just tell us what you
20 want so we can go forward.

21 If you want to have a discussion with him later
22 on, or anyone else about it --

23 MS. JAMES: Just wanted to set the record
24 straight.

25 MR. SUAREZ: Yeah. That's fine. We

1 understand. We actually listen to both sides, so we
2 understand --

3 MS. JAMES: Right.

4 MR. SUAREZ: -- where you're going.

5 MS. JAMES: Right.

6 MR. SUAREZ: Go ahead.

7 MS. JAMES: So thank you for your leadership.

8 And I appreciate every effort that you have put

9 forth to promote equality and to protect minors.

10 And let's let the children get through to the age of

11 18 and then let them decide how they want to move

12 forward.

13 Thank you.

14 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp

15 10:03 a.m. of DVD.)

16 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am.

17 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:03 a.m. of

18 DVD.)

19 (Meeting continues.)

20 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:06 a.m. of

21 DVD.)

22 MR. SUAREZ: Next, please, on this side.

23 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp

24 10:06 a.m. of DVD.)

25 MS. WYNNE-PHILLIPS: Good morning. My name is

1 Ann Wynne-Phillips. I live at 1878 New Hampshire
2 Avenue Northeast in St. Petersburg.

3 I am an ordained minister with the United
4 Church of Christ, currently serving here locally as
5 a chaplain. I am also an individual that was
6 involved in conversion/reparative therapy when I was
7 a part of it.

8 I was involved from 1995 to 2001. It was
9 called the ex-gay movement. I was involved both as
10 a participant as well as a staff member on one of
11 the pair ministries. So I've seen it from both
12 sides. I've experienced it from both sides.

13 I'm here in support of your ban, and I'm
14 telling you that it matters what you're doing here.
15 It would have mattered to me.

16 When I entered, as you probably could guess, in
17 1995, I was in my early 40s, already established in
18 my career. I had a support of family, support of
19 co-workers, but yet something didn't feel right in
20 my -- in my -- inside myself -- my lack of faith, my
21 lack of relationship with God.

22 And I met some people in the workplace that
23 were out of a fundamentalist church, and they seemed
24 to think that they had the answers for me, and I
25 thought perhaps they did.

1 And I was told that my sense of self, my being
2 an out lesbian woman was not reconcilable with my
3 faith, my newfound faith.

4 And so I entered an ex-gay ministry, a
5 reparative conversion ministry called Sought Out in
6 Virginia Beach, Virginia, for nine months.

7 And during that time I gave up everything that
8 I was told was part of the old life: books,
9 relationships, my car. I was told what to believe,
10 what God was saying, who God was, what to read, what
11 ministers to listen to, what radio stations, what
12 clothes to wear. I changed my look. I changed my
13 career.

14 And I was very good at that. I was a good
15 student, and I was a true believer. And I believe
16 God changed because I wanted to believe that because
17 I didn't want to lose God, and I was told I would.
18 And so I became involved as a staff member on a
19 ministry called Love in Action in Memphis,
20 Tennessee.

21 And so I've seen it on both sides and I've seen
22 what it does to families, pitting children against
23 their parents; telling the parents, "It's not your
24 fault. You didn't cause it"; telling the kids,
25 "What your parents did to you that caused this."

1 And all the people that I worked with at that
2 time -- they've all left that.

3 It would have mattered to me at 40 years old to
4 know that some people, that maybe don't have a dog
5 in this fight, planted their flag with me and said,
6 "This is wrong." And I think it will matter to
7 young people today.

8 Thank YOU for what you're doing.

9 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
10 10:10 a.m. of DVD.)

11 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am.

12 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:10 a.m. of
13 DVD.)

14 (Meeting continues.)

15 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:13 a.m. of
16 DVD.)

17 MR. SUAREZ: Next, please, on this side.

18 Yes, ma'am.

19 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
20 10:13 a.m. of DVD.)

21 MS. CONLEY: Good morning, Council. Thank you
22 for hearing everybody today.

23 My name is Kate Conley. I reside at
24 2035 Phillippe Parkway. And I'm reading a letter on
25 behalf of Jessica Deeb, licensed clinical social

1 worker. It's rather lengthy, but I'm just going to
2 keep going. Sorry if time cuts me off, but I'll
3 submit it to everybody.

4 "To Tampa City Council. I am a licensed
5 clinical social worker who runs her own private
6 practice and has been working in the field of mental
7 health counseling for over 12 years. I have worked
8 with clients of all ages in the LGBTQ community.

9 "It is my professional opinion that conversion
10 therapy, also known as reparative therapy, is
11 diametrical to the objective of therapy itself and
12 is harmful, especially to minors. As such, it is
13 necessary that you ban this unscientific practice.

14 "It is not my intent to limit the free will of
15 churches. I am trying to demonstrate that the very
16 specific and very skillful nature of the therapy is
17 unique and needs appropriate oversight.

18 "Therapy has four pillars and, thus, is like no
19 other. It empowers the client, facilitates
20 exploration, identifies a personal value system, and
21 demonstrates a benefit.

22 "If all four of these components are not
23 present, a client is not engaged in real therapy.
24 Therefore, conversion therapy is not real therapy.

25 "Please uphold the protection of minors, the

1 standards of the mental health profession and the
2 separation of church and state, especially where it
3 has been documented that harm is evident.

4 "Therapy empowers clients. Conversion therapy
5 has the singular goal of changing someone's sexual
6 or gender orientation, singling the person of
7 interest as wrong and sick, while usurping the word
8 'therapy' for their solution.

9 "Therapists such as myself do not use the word
10 'patient' because we do not see our clients as sick.
11 It is a sign of their health and strength that they
12 chose to reflect on their life and seek clarity
13 about their choices.

14 "It undermines the inherent goal of therapy,
15 mainly for a client to hone and trust their
16 knowledge of self, to imply that because they are
17 working through specific issues that they should
18 take on an overshadowing identity as sick or unwell
19 or wrong.

20 "Nor are we in a position to fix them. That
21 would indicate that the therapist is a change agent
22 instead of the literal process of therapy itself for
23 which the client engages themselves in the process
24 of exploration and identifying a personal value
25 system.

1 "We do not set the goals for our clients, nor
2 is it appropriate for our family members to
3 determine a client's goals. Our client is the only
4 one who tells us what the definition of a good life
5 is to them and not the other way around.

6 "It is not uncommon for that definition to
7 change or have been formulated, therefore
8 underscoring the importance of exploration.

9 "Therapy facilitates this exploration.
10 Conversion therapy is relentless in its truth and,
11 therefore, the opposite of safe or compassion space
12 to explore alternate views.

13 "We help clients understand the paradoxes
14 within the human psyche and the interplay of their
15 internal and external world. Our job is to show
16 clients how to think through difficult emotions and
17 create effective decision-making for themselves.

18 "We do this by modeling a space to question and
19 feel everything while patiently walking them through
20 the inquiry process.

21 "Finally, it is not our job to make moral
22 judgments. That is unprofessional."

23 Thank you.

24 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
25 10:16 a.m. of DVD.)

1 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you. And you got through
2 that without even having the red light come on.

3 (Inaudible.)

4 MR. SUAREZ: All right. Next, please, on this
5 side.

6 Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

7 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
8 10:16 a.m. of DVD.)

9 MS. LAZARUS: Dana Lazarus, 5012 Sun Ridge
10 Palms in Tampa.

11 So much to say.

12 I live in Tampa because I'm a fifth-generation
13 native of Tampa. My family helped build this city.
14 Otherwise, I don't know that I would because we
15 don't have -- there's certain things millennials
16 look for in cities, things like how compassionate
17 the city is.

18 And there's actually two things on the agenda
19 today that would help make the city more
20 compassionate and more attractive to progressive
21 people, people -- young people, really, is another
22 word for that.

23 And that is, we need to protect the homeless;
24 we need to protect people who are working to help
25 the homeless; and we need to protect LGBT people,

1 LGBT youth.

2 So I support Housing First. Actually, I did
3 some research on Housing First, and it really does
4 save the city money in the long run.

5 And also, I'm here to support the ban on
6 conversion therapy. And I started reading a letter
7 last time from someone who has been through
8 conversion therapy. And I didn't get to finish it,
9 so I'm just going to finish it today.

10 So his name is Marcel. His parents found him
11 with an empty pill bottle. Rushed him to the ER.

12 He decided he couldn't change who he was. He
13 says, "I told my parents that if I wanted -- if they
14 wanted me in their lives at all, they had to stop
15 pushing the ex-gay agenda and accept me for who I
16 was. I would die if I continued down this path."

17 (Inaudible.)

18 MS. LAZARUS: "The pain inflicted, although
19 with good intentions through Exodus International,
20 almost caused my death. At a young age when people
21 are so emotionally vulnerable, reparative therapy
22 causes immense harm. I would not wish that pain on
23 my worst enemy.

24 "After my attempted suicide I began to learn
25 to love myself for who I was. I did not need to

1 change myself. I did not need to be alone for my
2 entire life.

3 "Today I have happiness and the love of another
4 man, two things I was taught that I could never
5 tell -- that would never happen for me.

6 "Today I do all that I can to tell anyone I
7 meet that my belief there is something inherently
8 wrong with them for being gay, that they can have
9 happiness and love if they accept who they are.

10 "No one needs to change this part of
11 themselves. No one needs to be alone and -- be
12 alone their entire life.

13 "Forcing reparative therapy upon a vulnerable
14 young person has to end, or we will continue to lose
15 our gay children to suicide. Marcel."

16 So thank you.

17 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
18 10:19 a.m. of DVD.)

19 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am. Appreciate it.
20 Next, please.

21 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
22 10:19 a.m. of DVD.)

23 MR. ANDERSON: My -- my name is Michael
24 Anderson. I -- I am the community engagement
25 director over at Allendale United Methodist Church

1 in St. Pete. I -- I am also a -- a co-founder of
2 the movement Out and Loud Florida, which -- which is
3 a -- a LGBTQAI solidarity movement within basically
4 Tampa.

5 Basically, I -- I am here to -- to show support
6 for this ban. I -- I have just moved here and
7 started my job in basically August of 2016 when --
8 when I had started getting involved with Out and
9 Loud.

10 It was -- it -- it was a -- a response to a
11 hate group that has been happening in Ybor for
12 years, where -- where basically these individuals
13 would come out every single Friday night, spew hate
14 on pretty much anyone who walks in Ybor, calling --
15 saying they're going to go to hell, saying, you
16 know, "You should die already," type of thing like
17 that.

18 That -- that is not the basically type of city
19 that -- that I want to live in. And basically, I
20 will make sure that that does not happen. Thank
21 you.

22 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
23 10:21 a.m. of DVD.)

24 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

25 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:21 a.m. of

1 DVD.)

2 (Meeting continues.)

3 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:22 a.m. of
4 DVD.)

5 MR. SUAREZ: Sir, I apologize. You are up.

6 MR. ROLLINS: My name is Pastor J. Ricc

7 Rollins, II. I am the lead servant at the Edge

8 Community Church at 2705 East Dr. Martin Luther King

9 Jr. Boulevard.

10 Today we come back to talk about conversion
11 therapy and the ban.

12 Again, Guido, we thank you and to each of you
13 for listening. You've heard a lot of facts. You've
14 heard a lot of testimonies.

15 Ralph Ellison says that, "When I discover who I
16 am, I'll be free."

17 Oftentimes we're not given that opportunity to
18 discover because there's always someone telling us
19 who we should be and what we can and cannot do.

20 I sit and I look at the diversity before me.
21 Imagine if people had told you what you could or
22 could not do, Yolie. If they said that you could
23 never ever be a city council person because of
24 gender or, Frank, because of race or anyone because
25 of ethnic background.

1 When we start telling people what they can't
2 do, we take away the very freedoms that we say we
3 found this country on.

4 Today I would say to you that every young
5 person has a right to walk unto themselves.

6 Dr. Seuss says, "There will never be a truer
7 you, or you or you, than you."

8 Today I would ask you that as you consider this
9 ban that you would remember what it was like when
10 people told you that you couldn't or you shouldn't
11 or that you wouldn't.

12 I shared with you the comments of my mother
13 when I told her that I was same-gender loving, and
14 she asked if I needed help. And I did. I needed
15 help to walk in my truth.

16 The Bible says, "And ye shall know the truth
17 and it shall set you free."

18 Again, the freedoms of this country are based
19 on us being honest about ourselves. We cannot live
20 lies or live the lives of other people and expect to
21 live a whole life, a fulfilled life.

22 Today I would appeal to you to allow young
23 people and older people -- we heard testimonies of
24 someone at 40 that said that she'd been on both
25 sides of this.

1 Today I would say to you, imagine if no one had
2 allowed her the freedom to choose. She wouldn't be
3 who she is today. You wouldn't be who you are. I
4 wouldn't be who I am.

5 At the end of the day, the Good Book, or as my
6 friend Steve Marshall says, "the book that I really
7 like to read," says this: "And you shall know the
8 truth and it shall set you free."

9 Let's walk in that freedom together. Thank
10 you.

11 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
12 10:25 a.m. of DVD.)

13 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, sir.

14 Next, please, over on this side. Yes.

15 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
16 10:25 a.m. of DVD.)

17 MS. SYKES: Hi. Jamie Sykes. 1709 West
18 Richardson Place 33606.

19 I'm here to talk about two different issues
20 today, the first being the conversion therapy ban.

21 So I am a -- an out gay person. And I spoke
22 last time about what it was like growing up without
23 conversion therapy and how it was still really,
24 really hard to come to terms with myself. And I --
25 I can -- likened this conversion therapy technique

1 to suicide, both psychological and physical.

2 And when I said that, I didn't have enough time
3 to explain what I meant by that, so I'm going to do
4 that really quickly.

5 Even if someone physically survives this
6 program, they are not who they are supposed to be
7 anymore. They have been maimed. Their -- their
8 spirit, who they are supposed to be for this world,
9 has been utterly tormented, and they are not who
10 they are supposed to be.

11 And I firmly believe that that is a type of
12 murder that we are allowed -- allowing to happen to
13 our -- our children if we allow conversion therapy
14 to continue.

15 And also, just to address -- address a previous
16 comment saying that we would be robbing youth of
17 their opportunity to be abused. I think that that
18 is a more productive type of thievery than stealing
19 the food out of the mouths of houseless people, and
20 that segues me into the second issue that I'm here
21 to address.

22 I'm here in solidarity with Food Not Bombs in
23 our houseless community. There are a lot of people
24 who are in need in Tampa, as well as in other parts
25 of the county, other parts of the country. And we,

1 as a society, have been completely inadequate in
2 addressing those needs.

3 However, what has already been brought up
4 several times is Housing First initiatives, and
5 those have been very successful in other cities.

6 So while decriminalizing food-sharing may make
7 the city council look progressive and, you know, pat
8 ourselves on the back -- "Yay, we're not getting
9 arrested anymore" -- that's fine. But you're not
10 really fixing a problem and you're not really acting
11 out of true like humanitarian spirit because Food
12 Not Bombs is going to food-share regardless.

13 So I implore you to find the money to make
14 housing initiatives -- Housing First initiative
15 happen, because we have the resources. We're just
16 allocating them to things that really don't matter
17 in comparison to the human rights of food, water and
18 housing. Thank you.

19 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
20 10:28 a.m. of DVD.)

21 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

22 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:28 a.m. of
23 DVD.)

24 (Meeting continues.)

25 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:36 a.m. of

1 DVD.)

2 MR. SUAREZ: Next, please.

3 And, ma'am, before you start I'm just going to
4 make one last announcement. This young lady here in
5 the multi-colored shirt is our last speaker unless
6 anyone else wants to come forward. Last time.

7 If you want to come forward, get behind her
8 right now. Anyone else, this is it. This is my
9 last call.

10 Sir, you are going to be the last speaker.

11 Thank you.

12 Ma'am, you are next.

13 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
14 10:36 a.m. of DVD.)

15 MS. GONZALEZ: Hi. I'm Catalina Gonzalez. I
16 live at 2901 Landmark Way, Palm Harbor. I frequent
17 Tampa quite often.

18 I am a former New York City foster care
19 survivor. I am an entrepreneur, I am an animal
20 rescuer, and I am a mother of two.

21 I also represent Project No Labels, a nonprofit
22 organization that accepts people for who they are,
23 and we embrace each other and learn from each other.
24 I'm continuously learning every day.

25 I am in support of the ban on the conversion

1 therapy. I think it is, from what I've read --
2 because I always have to educate myself first on
3 things that I stand for.

4 It is inhumane, and it reminds me a lot of what
5 I went through in foster homes in New York. And it
6 does have an impact on who children become as
7 adults.

8 I am very lucky that I am who I am today. I
9 believe that's God, the universe, whatever. But it
10 was definitely not many of the humans that -- that
11 were around me at the time.

12 So I thank you for your support. Thank you
13 very much for listening.

14 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
15 10:37 a.m. of DVD.)

16 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am.

17 Next, please.

18 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
19 10:37 a.m. of DVD.)

20 MS. RAMOS: Good morning. My name is
21 (inaudible) Ramos at 220 South Malcolm Court. And
22 I'm a downtown Tampa resident, and I just wanted to
23 speak on particularly the -- the conversion ban for
24 minors in Tampa.

25 One of the main issues that I have with it is

1 that there are limited funds, as there is for the
2 City of Tampa that are being extended in ways that
3 are already trying to benefit the community, which I
4 so appreciate.

5 And I would further want to continue that in
6 the realm, particularly instead of conversion ban in
7 areas such as having lunch programs, more so for
8 students in public schools that wouldn't otherwise
9 have access to adequate nutrition, as well as winter
10 break.

11 Other programs as well, such as extending basic
12 education and transportation to areas where children
13 might have a more difficult time getting to school
14 and/or getting there safely, as well as more
15 appropriations for solar-related conversion within
16 the city. I love the wonderful job that it's
17 already been doing with the parking meters and the
18 different signs, but I think there might be more
19 work to do.

20 And also in the area of minors in particular
21 and benefiting them. I think that rather than using
22 their time, since we are all finite beings as far as
23 we know, in conversion therapy, extending their
24 education, prepare them possibly for higher academia
25 or the vocational work force if they choose to do

1 so, and also in particular to vocational training,
2 extending that possibly more so in public schools so
3 that children who might have different skills and
4 might be differently able might have more access to
5 the public market.

6 And as far as I know -- I'm sure there are more
7 ways that we could also help minors in the way that
8 the funds are used more efficiently and would use
9 the resources that we already have rather than
10 adequating {sic} new resources and new personnel
11 that would have to have new training and, I'm sure,
12 different facilities that might cost more in
13 building funds.

14 Thank you so much for listening.

15 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
16 10:40 a.m. of DVD.)

17 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you, ma'am.

18 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:40 a.m. of
19 DVD.)

20 (Meeting continues.)

21 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 11:29 a.m. of
22 DVD.)

23 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. We're on to Item Number 50.

24 Yes, Mr. Mueller. That's you.

25 MR. MUELLER: Yes. We're back for first

1 reading.

2 You -- the only thing you asked for from last
3 time we discussed this was that the fines be put in,
4 which it has been. Fine for a first violation is
5 \$1,000 and a fine for a second and subsequent
6 violations are \$5,000.

7 MR. SUAREZ: Any questions or comments from
8 Council at this time concerning the -- the revised
9 ordinance on first read?

10 Okay. Do I see anyone? Not at all.

11 Mr. Maniscalco, do you want to take up that
12 ordinance, sir?

13 MR. MANISCALCO: Yes, sir. Thank you very
14 much, Mr. Chairman.

15 I have an ordinance being presented for first
16 reading consideration, an ordinance of the City of
17 Tampa, Florida, relating to the conversion therapy
18 on patients who are minors; making revisions to the
19 City of Tampa Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14
20 offenses; creating Article X, Sections 14-310
21 through 14-313; amending Chapter 19, property
22 maintenance and structural standards; amending
23 Section 19.4A2, Department of Code Enforcement;
24 duties and scope of authority of the director
25 repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances in

1 conflict therewith; providing for severability;
2 providing an effective date.

3 MS. CAPIN: Second.

4 MR. SUAREZ: Okay. I have a motion from
5 Mr. Maniscalco. I have a second from Ms. Capin.

6 All in favor of that motion, please indicate by
7 saying "aye."

8 (MULTIPLE VOICES: Aye.)

9 MR. SUAREZ: Any opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

12 Yes, ma'am.

13 THE CLERK: First reading -- or second reading
14 will occur on April 6, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

15 MR. SUAREZ: Thank you.

16 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 11:31 a.m. of
17 DVD.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH)

I, Michele Coburn, FPR, Stenographic Shorthand Reporter, Notary Public, State of Florida, CERTIFY that I was authorized to and did stenographically transcribe the foregoing proceedings from March 16, 2017, from a DVD-recorded proceeding; and that the transcript is a true and complete record to the best of my ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the attorneys or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 9th day of January, 2018.

Michele Coburn

MICHELE COBURN, FPR
Stenographic Shorthand Reporter
Notary Public, State of Florida

IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING on 04/06/2017

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IN RE: TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

STENOGRAPHICALLY TRANSCRIBED VIA DVD

EXCERPTS OF
TAMPA CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE TAKEN: APRIL 6, 2017
TIME: 10:29 A.M.
PLACE: TAMPA CITY HALL
315 EAST KENNEDY BOULEVARD
THIRD FLOOR
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33602
TRANSCRIBED BY: MICHELE COBURN, FPR

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TAMPA CITY COUNCIL:

MIKE SUAREZ

CHARLIE MIRANDA

YVONNE YOLIE CAPIN, CHAIRWOMAN

HARRY COHEN

FRANK REDDICK

GUIDO MANISCALCO

LUIS VIERA

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:29 a.m. of
3 DVD.)

4 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
5 10:29 a.m. of DVD.)

6 MR. CITRO: Good morning, Council. My name is
7 Michael Citro. I am 21 years old. I'm from an
8 Italian immigrant family. My mother, who loves me
9 more than life, raised me in the Christian church.

10 I am the first in my family to go to college,
11 and I work for the Florida House of Representatives.

12 Coming from poverty, I worked three jobs in
13 high school to support myself, and yet I still
14 graduated.

15 I am a man who falls in love with men, and I
16 survived the torture of conversion therapy abuse.

17 As you can see, we, as a community -- and I'm
18 representing -- are not mentally disabled nor
19 incapacitated. We are productive and contributing
20 members of society.

21 MR. COHEN: Excuse me. I'm sorry to interrupt
22 you. But that is actually set for a public hearing.
23 So the time to speak on that is when it actually
24 comes up on the agenda.

25 Madam Clerk, can you tell me what item number

1 that is?

2 We'll -- we'll let you know when it will be
3 time to speak on that.

4 MR. CITRO: Is it today?

5 THE CLERK: It is today.

6 MR. CITRO: Oh, okay.

7 MR. COHEN: Number 88. I'm sorry. It is going
8 to be a little while.

9 MR. CITRO: No. That's fine. When they said
10 to get up, I was like --

11 (Inaudible.)

12 MR. CITRO: Because I knew the numbers. I was
13 like, this is really weird. So thank you.

14 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
15 10:30 a.m. of DVD.)

16 MR. COHEN: Thank you.

17 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:30 a.m. of
18 DVD.)

19 (Meeting continues.)

20 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:49 a.m. of
21 DVD.)

22 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

23 We move on to Item 88.

24 MR. MUELLER: Good morning, Council.

25 (Inaudible) legal department, here on second

1 reading.

2 Please note there has been a substitute
3 ordinance that is changing a scrivener's error. The
4 title originally identified a Section 19.4A2 was
5 being changed, and it should have been 19-4A2. So
6 it was just a scrivener's error.

7 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

8 This is a public hearing and it is a second
9 reading. And if there's anyone in the public that
10 would like to speak on Item 88, please come up. And
11 it's a non-quasi, so --

12 (Speaker begins speaking at approximately
13 timestamp 10:50 a.m. of DVD.)

14 MR. CITRO: Hello again.

15 MS. CAPIN: Hello again.

16 MR. CITRO: Round two. It's like a video game.

17 Good morning. My name is Michael Citro. I am
18 21 years old. I am from an Italian immigrant
19 family. My mother, who loves me more than life,
20 raised me in the Christian church.

21 I am the first in my family to go to college,
22 and I work for the Florida House of Representatives.

23 Coming from poverty, I worked three jobs in
24 high school to support myself and still graduated.

25 I am a man who falls in love with men, and I

1 have survived the torture of conversion therapy.

2 As you can see, we, as a community, are not
3 mentally disabled nor incapacitated. We are
4 productive and contributing members of society.

5 Throughout my life I was bullied, I was
6 verbally abused, and I was beaten.

7 I've been anointed with holy water, held down
8 on my face with oil, spoken over in tongues by
9 pastors as they shouted Bible verses at me while I
10 was held down to a chair as they tried to remove
11 what they called a demonic possession.

12 I was desperate enough to let it happen,
13 influenced by my peers in the church, because I was
14 told I was going to hell and that I was going to be
15 separated from my family for eternity.

16 But conversion therapy does not work.
17 Conversion therapy has been rejected by the American
18 Psychological Association and every other
19 professional organization.

20 Conversion therapy is abuse, not therapy.
21 Conversion -- abuse can cost up to ten grand per
22 year per child, and it contributes to suicide,
23 self-harm, depression and homelessness. Who really
24 wins in this type of therapy?

25 Parents subject their children to this abuse

1 against their will, but these children don't want
2 it. They want to be loved and they want to be
3 accepted for who they are.

4 Instead of teaching these children they're
5 worthless and their love is a sin, we must show them
6 that they are valued. Forty percent of homeless
7 youth in our nation identifies LGBTQ. That is forty
8 percent of children in our nation.

9 LGBTQ youth attempt suicide at a rate four
10 times higher than their heterosexual peers.

11 We must stand together to support this ban of
12 abuse and create safe havens for LGBTQ youth and
13 make sure that there are ample resources and they
14 are able to be utilized during the blossoming from
15 youth to adulthood.

16 I was raised by my single mother knowing God
17 loved me and that I'm a miracle, taken in by a
18 Jewish family also at the age of ten. Because of
19 that support, I persevered. But so many youth do
20 not have that luxurious privilege.

21 We cannot force minors to repress their
22 identity and hate themselves. We cannot contribute
23 to the already skyrocketed rate of suicide and
24 homelessness in our beautiful state. We need to
25 make sure that they know they are perfect just the

1 way they are.

2 We mold our future through the lives of our
3 children, and they will see it through their eyes.
4 And we must assure them that our world is full of
5 opportunity and welcomes them, especially them, just
6 the way they are.

7 Thank you, and peace be with you.

8 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
9 10:53 a.m. of DVD.)

10 MS. CAPIN: Thank you very much.

11 Next.

12 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
13 10:53 a.m. of DVD.)

14 MS. LAZARUS: Hello. I'm Dana. 5012 Sun Ridge
15 Palms, Tampa.

16 It's good to see everyone here today. Thank
17 you all for your words of support for this ordinance
18 over the past two meetings.

19 I'm just here as a millennial, a gay youth.
20 I'm pansexual, which means that I fall in love with
21 people for their personalities not their genitalia
22 or whatever physical aspects about them they were
23 born with.

24 And I also am a functioning, productive member
25 of this city, and I would really like to be -- to

1 remain in this city and work as a professional.

2 And I will tell you, as a millennial, that
3 protections for LGBTQ people and LGBTQ youth is a
4 very attractive thing for a city to do. It means
5 that people like me and my friends will be safe
6 living and working here, as well as youth like me
7 growing up.

8 So I didn't really prepare anything. I'm just
9 really happy that this ordinance is being seen and
10 that you guys are listening. So thank you so much.

11 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
12 10:54 a.m. of DVD.)

13 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

14 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 10:54 a.m. of
15 DVD.)

16 (Meeting continues.)

17 (Excerpt begins at timestamp 10:54 a.m. of
18 DVD.)

19 MR. ROLLINS: My name is Reverend J. Ricc
20 Rollins, II. I'm the pastor of the Edge Community
21 Church at 2705 East Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
22 Boulevard.

23 Again, Council, we thank for your consideration
24 of this ordinance.

25 You've heard the stories over and over. You've

1 heard everybody's story. You've heard my story.

2 And today I -- I ask myself, what could I say?

3 And the scripture comes back from a book that
4 says that love is patient, that love is kind. It
5 goes on to list what love is.

6 Any child that comes into this -- to this --
7 this sphere, this world, this planet is looking to
8 be loved. And it is out of love that a lot of
9 parents will try to do what they think is best
10 instead of allowing the process to manifest in which
11 a child can rightfully say that I am.

12 I told you the story of my -- at 19 when I said
13 to my mother that I was the same gender-loving
14 person.

15 She said, "Baby, do you need some help?"

16 Some would say, "Well, was she trying to say
17 that you needed to change?"

18 She said, "No. All I want to make sure is that
19 you are the best that you possibly can be."

20 My parents adopted me at two months from a
21 mother who did not know what to do with me and did
22 not want me and was ready to give me away.

23 My grandmother told me that one day that they
24 would come to their senses and give me back.

25 Whether she was joking or just being mean, I don't

1 have any idea. But I walked in the fear that that
2 would happen.

3 So at 19 you can only imagine me saying to my
4 mother, a church-going woman who loved Jesus more
5 than she loved herself -- and she said, "Baby, do
6 you want some help?"

7 She said, "Because when God brought you to the
8 planet, he could have winked, blinked, snapped or
9 blew and changed you. But he brought you here for a
10 purpose."

11 Don't we allow each and every child that comes
12 to this planet to fulfill that purpose?

13 Today when you're thinking about that, think
14 about those children who did not have that choice.

15 I won't talk about failure and I won't quote
16 statistics. I'll ask that you listen to your heart
17 and the things that you wanted to do when they said,
18 "Yolie, you'd never be a city council person," or
19 Frank or any of the rest of you. But you are.

20 So today I leave you with a quote from Ralph
21 Ellison that says, "When I discover who I am, I'll
22 be free." That's what this is about: the discovery
23 of the process.

24 Thank you.

25 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp

1 10:57 a.m. of DVD.)

2 MS. CAPIN: Thank you very much.

3 Next, please.

4 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp

5 10:57 a.m. of DVD.)

6 MS. BROWN: My name is Cathy Brown. I live at

7 3817 Rivena Drive in Valrico, Florida.

8 I feel compelled to come before you and ask you

9 to please vote no on this conversion therapy ban.

10 It is not the right of the city council to regulate

11 mental health therapy.

12 And therapy is not abuse. When it is abuse,

13 there are laws to take care of that. An additional

14 law does not make a difference in that.

15 The State of Florida is the one that regulates

16 professionals such as mental health doctors and

17 their actions.

18 When minors are sick, it is up to their parents

19 to decide when it is time to go to the doctor,

20 whether the illness is physical or mental, whether

21 they are having problems. When they are having

22 problems with their identification, therapy can help

23 in either direction. But by having this ban, are

24 you denying that help completely for these people?

25 It's hard enough to deal with these problems.

1 Do you demand that these -- these minors deal with
2 it on their own?

3 There's scientific -- there is no scientific
4 evidence that people are born that way. There are
5 no studies that say this.

6 If you pass this ban, you will be subject to
7 lawsuits. The City of Tampa will spend hours and
8 dollars of tax money to fight this. Is that what
9 you want?

10 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
11 10:59 a.m. of DVD.)

12 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

13 Next, please.

14 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
15 10:59 a.m. of DVD.)

16 MR. KNOX: Good morning, Madam Chair and
17 members of the council. Thank you for considering
18 this important issue.

19 My name is Dr. Brian Knox, and I live at
20 2113 Southwest Westshore Boulevard.

21 I'm an associate professor of internal medicine
22 and pediatrics at the University of South Florida
23 College of Medicine. I'm board-certified in both
24 internal medicine and pediatrics and a fellow of the
25 American College of Physicians and the American

1 Academy of Pediatrics.

2 I come to you today to speak in support of this
3 ban. I come to you from the perspective of a
4 physician interested in protecting health, the
5 wellbeing and the safety of all children,
6 adolescents and adults, including LGBT citizens.

7 Every major mainstream medical and
8 psychological group in the United States has
9 denounced this practice in the long term after
10 reviewing the peer-reviewed valid medical
11 literature.

12 The therapy seeks to attempt to change one's
13 sexual orientation or gender identity. And it is
14 well-known and accepted that sexual orientation and
15 gender identity, while they may be fluid and we may
16 not understand where they originate, are not
17 changeable, not changeable through willpower nor
18 through therapy nor through medication.

19 Further, the distress and the depression and
20 the anxiety experienced by LGBT people are in large
21 part due to the social stigmatization of being LGBT,
22 not the orientation itself.

23 Attempting to change the traits that cannot be
24 willfully changed increases anxiety, distress and
25 ultimately suicide and suicide attempts.

1 To allow this alleged treatment to be provided,
2 which worsens wellbeing and increases mortality, and
3 especially in a young, vulnerable population, when
4 it offers no scientifically-validated chance of
5 success, is wrong and dangerous.

6 I'd like to share one standard of care from one
7 of our major institutions, the Society of Adolescent
8 Health and Medicine. And they say healthcare
9 providers should understand that the majority of
10 LGBT young people are healthy and well-adjusted
11 teenagers and young adults.

12 For youth who are struggling with sexual
13 orientation or gender identity, affirmative
14 therapeutic approaches can help adolescents explore
15 their identities in a helping manner.

16 Reparative therapy, which attempts to change
17 one's sexual orientation or gender identity, is
18 inherently coercive and inconsistent with current
19 standards of medical care. That is one of many
20 practice guidelines that are -- that are -- that are
21 consistent.

22 It is important to consider because family
23 acceptance of these youth is a powerful protective
24 factor from negative mental health incomes --
25 outcomes, self-harm and suicide and suicide

1 attempts.

2 Suicide is the second leading cause of death
3 amongst our young people age 10 to 24 (inaudible.)
4 The rate of suicide attempts is four times greater
5 for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth as it is for
6 their straight counterparts.

7 Lesbian, gay and bisexual (inaudible) from
8 highly-rejecting families are 8.4 times more likely
9 to have attempted suicide than their LGB peers who
10 have low reports, and that's still four times above
11 the straight counterparts.

12 Because conversion therapy increases
13 internalization of homophobia and transphobia and
14 inherently places a patient in a position of
15 decreased therapeutic and family support, it risks
16 worsening these rates.

17 As medical and psychological professionals, we
18 should be devoting our efforts at providing
19 affirmative and supportive care for LGBT individuals
20 and their families.

21 Thank you again for your attention to this
22 important matter. Please feel free to reach out if
23 you have any questions or would like follow-up
24 (inaudible) for research. Thank you.

25 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp

1 11:02 a.m. of DVD.)

2 MS. CAPIN: Thank you very much, sir.

3 Next, please.

4 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp

5 11:02 a.m. of DVD.)

6 MS. ESTES: I'm Faith Estes. And I just want
7 to thank the council today for bringing this ban on
8 gay conversion therapy forward and for taking public
9 comment and recognizing the need to protect our
10 children and protect our citizens in this community
11 where we can live here and feel safe, and safe from
12 so-called therapy that I firmly believe is -- is
13 child abuse. And it's physical abuse, emotional,
14 mental.

15 Therapy is supposed to help people. It's
16 supposed to make them feel safer, make them be
17 better citizens and feel protected. It's not
18 supposed to tell them that they are wrong, to shame
19 them, to make them fear.

20 And I just -- I'm very grateful to this council
21 for putting forward this ban. So thank you.

22 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp

23 11:03 a.m. of DVD.)

24 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

25 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp

1 11:03 a.m. of DVD.)

2 MR. KEMPLE: My name is Terry Kemple. I live
3 in -- at 2312 Cherry Ridge Lane in Brandon.

4 I lead the Community Issues Council, which is a
5 3,300-member group that really stands for
6 Judeo-Christian principles in our community.

7 And I have to say, I hadn't planned on saying
8 this, but I've got to say up front, you've heard at
9 this meeting and other meetings that the APA -- the
10 American Psychological Association, American
11 Psychiatric Association and others have rejected
12 conversion therapy or so-called conversion therapy.

13 The reality is, is what they've said. And I've
14 read them. Their statements say that there is no --
15 there's -- there's no study that shows conclusively
16 that it's positive.

17 What -- what is implied in that is that there's
18 no study that shows that it's negative either. And
19 I think that you should be aware of that. It might
20 help when you're considering things to actually read
21 what they say.

22 If you vote for this ban, you're demonstrating
23 that you bought into the false premise that sexual
24 orientation is an unchangeable characteristic.

25 I ask you to listen to the testimony of people

1 who have spoken here in this council chamber and
2 other places testifying to the change they
3 experienced in their own sexual orientation, some
4 with the help of mental health professionals.

5 I will ask you also to look at the scientific
6 evidence. There is none that shows that sexual
7 orientation is either genetic or unchangeable.

8 Not every young person who experiences same-sex
9 attractions is uncomfortable with those feelings.
10 And I don't think that anyone in this room would
11 suggest that there should be an effort to force
12 those who are comfortable to change.

13 But by voting for this ban, you'll be denying
14 the help of mental health professionals to those who
15 are uncomfortable and forcing them to accept the
16 lifestyle that they do want to change. There are
17 already laws that protect children from abuse.

18 This ordinance, rather than serving the stated
19 purpose of protecting children, will actually be
20 creating an abusive situation for those children who
21 desire professional help in finding relief from
22 unwanted same-sex attractions. Thank you.

23 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
24 11:06 a.m. of DVD.)

25 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

1 Next.

2 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
3 11:06 a.m. of DVD.)

4 MR. SMITH: Good morning. My name is Travis
5 Smith. I'm the senior pastor at Hillsdale Baptist
6 Church in Tampa, Florida: 6201 Ehrlich Road.

7 And you've heard different quotes today. I'll
8 give another quote, Proverbs 29, Verse 15: "A child
9 left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

10 The reality is, I don't think there's any other
11 area in a child's life that a body, such as you,
12 would rise up and tell parents that, "You cannot
13 seek counsel."

14 So I wanted to read to you a statement that I
15 have -- and I'm not here to be a friend. I am here
16 to provoke at least a thought on this matter.

17 I'm appalled that you're even considering a
18 vote that would outlaw, make it legal, make it an
19 ordinance, against parents seeking counsel of
20 licensed mental health professionals for minor
21 children struggling with same-sex attraction.

22 Then I'll say this to you because you are
23 elected officials. I'm appalled also that an
24 insurance agent, racehorse breeder, retired jeweler,
25 two lawyers and an English major would presume to

1 have the right or wisdom to demand by fiat that your
2 will be imposed on the families and licensed mental
3 health providers and counselors in Tampa.

4 I would say, "How dare you attack the sanctity
5 of the home and family under some misguided notion
6 you know better or perceive you have the authority
7 to usurp the role, wisdom and authority of parents?"

8 I would say, "How dare you interfere with the
9 God-given role and responsibility parents bear in
10 knowing, training and guiding their own children?"

11 So on behalf of the membership of Hillsdale
12 Baptist Church, many of whom reside in Tampa city
13 itself, I would say to you today, regardless of your
14 good intentions, a vote for a law that limits or
15 prohibits loving parents from seeking counsel and
16 guidance from a licensed mental health professional
17 is an incorrigible act and an overreach of your
18 office and responsibilities to this community.

19 And I would say to you today respectfully, get
20 out of our homes. Stop meddling with our children.
21 Don't you dare use heavy-healed -- the heavy-healed
22 boot of government to crush the freedoms and
23 liberties of the citizens of this community who have
24 the right to seek counsel, help and guidance for
25 their children.

1 Your action of approving this ordinance is an
2 overreach into the homes, and you're violating the
3 rights of parents. Thank you.

4 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
5 11:08 a.m. of DVD.)

6 MS. CAPIN: Next.

7 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
8 11:08 a.m. of DVD.)

9 MS. BRITTON: My name is Nancy Britton. I'm a
10 psychologist in St. Pete.

11 I originally just came here to support my young
12 friend, Michael Citro, who spoke so eloquently about
13 his experiences. I wish you could hear more from
14 him.

15 But I am a psychologist, and I felt an
16 obligation to speak on this just briefly.

17 Conversion -- so-called conversion therapy does
18 not work. It does not change a person's sexual
19 orientation.

20 What it does, in fact, is cause additional
21 depression, anxiety about who they are on a basic
22 level. Some try and some complete suicide because
23 of this therapy.

24 Every psychological association rejects this
25 so-called therapy. It is not therapy. Being gay is

1 not a disease. It's nothing that needs to be cured.
2 There's nothing to cure. It's a perfectly normal
3 variant of human behavior.

4 I urge you to come together for our children
5 and ban this abusive program. We need to accept our
6 children as they are. Thank you.

7 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
8 11:10 a.m. of DVD.)

9 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

10 Next, please.

11 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
12 11:10 a.m. of DVD.)

13 MR. SCHMIDT: Good morning, Council. Dan
14 Schmidt. Resident of Valrico -- Valrico, Florida.

15 Do I need to give my address?

16 MS. CAPIN: Please.

17 MR. SCHMIDT: 508 (Inaudible).

18 I've got three things to say about voting no
19 for this ordinance. One is good news for both
20 sides, and that is there's been a lot of progress in
21 this area over the last 20 years. I know this from
22 personal experience.

23 To ban the counseling now would actually stop
24 progression in the right direction. The counseling
25 is not about a goal of seeing somebody get married

1 to the -- the opposite sex. The goal is health
2 counseling.

3 And a lot of education has been happening over
4 the last 20 years. I see even the church now is --
5 is moving in a direction of understanding exactly
6 how to deal with this issue from even a religious
7 point of view.

8 Don't vote no -- vote no on this to -- to avoid
9 the progress that's already made in this topic.

10 Now, on a personal level is one I can speak to
11 this. For over 50 years I've been dealing with this
12 from a somewhat nonpersonal aspect because I had
13 friends back when I was young, and I didn't know
14 exactly what to say to them.

15 But I dealt with that and I stuck with them
16 through all those years when they were going to deal
17 with very depressive and suicidal thoughts, and I
18 walked with them through that. So I began to
19 understand a little bit of what they were going
20 through. And the purpose wasn't to change them.
21 The purpose was to counsel with them.

22 It became a little more personal about 15 years
23 ago -- actually, longer than that -- because I knew
24 it was happening. I saw one of my sons, my third
25 son definitely going to be dealing with this issue

1 when he was young.

2 And he wouldn't come out with it, even though I
3 asked him straight up, "Is this what you're dealing
4 with? I'd love to help you with it." He didn't do
5 that until he was into his young 20s because of the
6 nature of our society. It just wasn't open.

7 When he finally did come out, we hugged. We
8 got with each other. We tried some counseling back
9 then. This is about 15 years ago. And I could tell
10 it wasn't working. It wasn't the right message for
11 him. All right. But things have changed, you know.

12 I've got another son, my youngest son, my
13 youngest child out of six. I could see he was also
14 dealing with this. And so by the time he was 13, 14
15 I began to talk to him about it.

16 By that time there was good counseling and I
17 knew of some because I was involved with this. He
18 got the counseling he needed when he was 15 through
19 18. The goal, again, wasn't to change him. It was
20 to help him through these difficult choices.

21 Sexual orientation and attraction is a wide
22 variety of things. And it's like -- it helped him
23 through. He became a much healthier person.

24 Now, both my sons are still in the lifestyle.
25 I don't have a problem with that. But I helped them

1 through. I have a great relationship with both of
2 them.

3 Don't vote -- vote no on this thing because the
4 progress that has been made -- you're going to see
5 it only get better. Counselors are much more wise
6 about what it is to say and what it means to live
7 with this and give them all the choices known.

8 You're going to actually hear from people that
9 it is possible to change, but that's not the goal.

10 Thank you very much.

11 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
12 11:13 a.m. of DVD.)

13 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

14 Next, please.

15 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
16 11:13 a.m. of DVD.)

17 MR. THORPE: Good morning, Council. My name is
18 David Thorpe. I'm a 50-year-old male.

19 I was introduced to sex and sexuality when I
20 was seven. I basically lost my childhood because of
21 that. I've been struggling with it since then.

22 I grew up in church. At the age of 23 I walked
23 away from the church.

24 For 18 years I was in the gay lifestyle. I saw
25 friends and a lover die of AIDS. I struggled myself

1 as far as psychologically.

2 At the age of 41 -- and I would say it's God,
3 because I am a Christian, came to me and -- and
4 posed a question to me. Essentially, I walked away
5 from the lifestyle.

6 I did seek counseling from pastors as well as
7 professionals. It hasn't done any damage to me.

8 I am opposed to this. I don't think that the
9 council has the right to dictate how parents are to
10 raise their children.

11 I'm happily married four years March 23rd this
12 year.

13 The fact of -- the -- the -- the people that
14 are gay and -- they -- they may say it's -- it's not
15 a choice. I don't know. I'm not God. But I -- I
16 don't think that it's right to -- the fact that
17 this -- this is to prevent professionals from giving
18 counsel based on parents wanting to seek counsel. I
19 believe that they should have the choice.

20 And my friend who just previously spoke -- the
21 fact of it shouldn't be for the fact of telling them
22 how they should go, whether it's -- if they choose
23 to be gay or if that's how they -- if that's how
24 they feel they are, so be it.

25 But for those such as myself that struggled

1 with it and wanted to come out of it, I believe that
2 if that -- if -- if counselors and professional are
3 not allowed to counsel, then it's basically going to
4 take the right away from people like myself when I
5 was seeking to come out of that choice, out of that
6 life. It's going to take that choice away.

7 So I would say no on -- on this, whatever it
8 is.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
11 11:16 a.m. of DVD.)

12 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

13 Next.

14 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
15 11:16 a.m. of DVD.)

16 MS. BENNETT: Good morning. I'm Claire
17 Bennett. 5012 Homer Avenue.

18 I heard about this ordinance late yesterday.
19 Today I come to you as a mom. This is a role I
20 love. And I will protect and I will uphold when any
21 child is about to be compromised, especially in the
22 public square. We are in the square public right
23 now.

24 Should this ordinance be allowed? I don't
25 think so. I don't think you should allow this ban,

1 and I'm going to tell you why. And again, I'm
2 addressing you as a mom.

3 And now I have a question. Why should this
4 city council seek to prohibit parents of a child
5 from exercising their rights as a parent to seek the
6 best assistance for their child?

7 Please, all of you council members, limit your
8 role to city business. Where you believe that you
9 must enter into issues of family life, do so only in
10 a manner that empowers and does not diminish the
11 parent in their role as a parent.

12 You may or may not understand that a
13 same-sex-attraction lifestyle can be complicated.
14 Those with same-sex attraction have their own story
15 as to how and when and why and maybe and maybe not.

16 As a mom, I would hope that you would not
17 interfere with me and my husband as parents.

18 Thank you very much.

19 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
20 11:18 a.m. of DVD.)

21 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

22 Next.

23 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
24 11:18 a.m. of DVD.)

25 MR. CULLIGAN: Good morning. Good to be with

1 each of you this morning. My name is Mark Culligan.

2 I am a resident of South Tampa.

3 I am a former homosexual who lived for 20 years
4 with a homosexual struggle. I have been out of
5 homosexual acting-out for 30 years. I went through
6 clinical and therapeutic interventions. And my life
7 is happy, contented, and I am at peace with who I am
8 today.

9 I'm here today to encourage the council to vote
10 no to the proposed ordinance prohibiting counseling
11 for minors who deal with same-sex attraction, as you
12 know, Agenda Item Number 88.

13 Recently I read an article by a gay man still
14 living in the gay community. He titled the article
15 "Together Alone: The Epidemic of Gay Loneliness."

16 In this article, among other sad statistics, he
17 said this. "In a recent survey of gay men who
18 recently arrived in New York City, three-fourths, or
19 75 percent, suffered from anxiety or depression,
20 abused drugs and alcohol, or were having risky sex
21 or some combination of the three."

22 He went on to say, "In our lifetime the gay
23 community has made more progress on legal and social
24 acceptance than any other demographic group in
25 history."

1 "Still," he says, "as we celebrate the scale
2 and speed of this change, the rates of depression,
3 loneliness and substance abuse in the gay community
4 remain stuck in the same place they have been for
5 decades."

6 So, I so respect this gay gentleman who just
7 was so honest about his experience in the gay
8 community, and he's still there.

9 So one could conclude that those who choose to
10 live in the gay community struggle with a lot of
11 unhealthy, emotional and mental health problems.
12 For 75 percent, it was not a healthy choice.

13 And I can tell you from personal experience
14 that I left the homosexual lifestyle because I
15 finally realized it was not a healthy choice for me.

16 So in light of what I've shared with you,
17 please vote no on the proposed ordinance prohibiting
18 counselors from helping the precious minor children
19 of Hillsborough County who are confused and need and
20 want counseling. Protect our children and give them
21 choices.

22 And by the way, if you know a gay man or a
23 woman going through anxiety or depression, I would
24 consider it an honor to be a friend and to stand
25 with them and listen to them and help them find the

1 help that they need.

2 Thank you.

3 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
4 11:21 a.m. of DVD.)

5 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

6 Next.

7 All right. Anyone else who's going to be
8 speaking on this, please stand if you can. If not,
9 the lady in black will be the -- the last speaker.

10 Thank you.

11 Yes, ma'am.

12 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
13 11:21 a.m. of DVD.)

14 MS. THOMPSON: Hi. Good morning. My name is
15 Natalie Thompson. I'm a parent from Brandon,
16 Florida, and I'm here to ask you to vote no on the
17 ban.

18 I'm coming here as a parent today, and I find
19 it appalling that this ban would restrict my rights
20 as a mother to be able to speak up for my child.

21 I want you to take into consideration that
22 myself and parents like me who live in Hillsborough
23 County would seriously consider relocating to a
24 community that supports us as parents, that allows
25 us to seek all the help that we need for our

1 children and not restricting us.

2 I don't think it's the council's right or
3 responsibility to come into my home and tell me how
4 and when and what type of thing I need to do with my
5 child. It's outside of your jurisdiction.

6 I also wanted -- want you to consider that
7 lawsuits and many consequences will come if you
8 decide to vote yes on this, just for the simple fact
9 that it restricts a family's right to protect itself
10 and to seek the best interest of its members.

11 I also want you to consider the fact that
12 people are moving -- I moved to Tampa recently.
13 People move to Tampa for the economic ... and the
14 benefits of providing for their children and
15 providing for ourselves.

16 But it's a very discouraging piece of
17 information to know that Hillsborough County and
18 Tampa will not be supportive of me and my family
19 here and would be something to consider in
20 relocating.

21 Thank you.

22 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
23 11:23 a.m. of DVD.)

24 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

25 Next, please.

1 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
2 11:23 a.m. of DVD.)

3 MR. PUGLIESE: Good morning, council members.
4 My name is Jeffrey Pugliese.

5 I grew up in Tampa in the Ybor City area. My
6 name is Jeffrey Pugliese and I have, you know,
7 family here. This is where I grew up.

8 I come from a good family and very proud of
9 they -- what they tried to raise me and guide me.
10 And I'm glad that there wasn't any overreach by the
11 local government saying, "This isn't allowed. That
12 isn't allowed."

13 Let us not ever underestimate the power of one
14 voice and the influence.

15 I live in a neighborhood. I talk to my
16 neighbors. I go to college. I attend college. I
17 go to a local church. The citizens that I am
18 associated with share the same values and would be
19 here today if they weren't working or going to
20 school.

21 I ask you to please vote no on Item Number 88.

22 I'm also -- was impressed by the Islam
23 gentleman who mentioned, you know, his god. You
24 know, it's about a relationship. And I serve a god
25 who loves everyone. You know, his word says,

1 "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord
2 shall be saved," and that included me.

3 I wasn't always squeaky-clean or perfect, you
4 know, by any means. But I love everybody. I'm
5 taught to love God with all my heart and my neighbor
6 as myself. God loves me so much that he wouldn't
7 allow me to stay the same. And I'm a work in
8 progress. We offer a message of truth and hope to
9 people who are depressed and confused.

10 I thank you for your time and the opportunity
11 to speak. I pray for you always for protection
12 around your family and wisdom in guiding this --
13 this community. You have an awesome responsibility
14 and you have tough decisions to make.

15 I'm not here to intimidate you. I'm here to
16 tell you that you're lifted up in prayer.

17 Thank you for your time.

18 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
19 11:25 a.m. of DVD.)

20 MS. CAPIN: Thank you, sir.

21 Next, please.

22 (Speaker begins speaking at timestamp
23 11:26 a.m. of DVD.)

24 MS. CONLEY: Good morning, City Council and
25 Madam Chairwoman Capin.

1 My name is Kate Conley, communications chair of
2 the Hillsborough County LGBT caucus democratic and
3 the LGBT Advisory Council of Tampa Bay and recent
4 appointee to the Hillsborough County Advisory
5 Council, here to support the adoption of the
6 ordinance to ban conversion therapy in minors by
7 licensed officials.

8 And I simply want to say thank you. I am so
9 grateful for the patience and compassion you have
10 all shown in your efforts to hear all sides. You
11 have heard from many supporters over the past
12 several weeks to adopt this ban, ranging from strong
13 survivors, former conversion therapists, religious
14 leaders, many medical professionals and powerful
15 LGBT organizations.

16 I personally have received even more inquiries
17 from fellow government officials, including the
18 St. Pete City Council, state representatives, a
19 retired judge and more, all in support of this ban.
20 And all of these groups have offered legal support
21 should we ever need it.

22 You are leading a positive change, and I am so
23 grateful. I'm also humbled and honored by the
24 immense support we have received since City
25 Councilman Maniscalco proposed this ban. It has

1 already brought our community together in great ways
2 and is a beacon of hope.

3 Thank you-all kindly for continuing to keep our
4 community a welcoming and safe place for our
5 thriving LGBT families and most importantly our
6 youth.

7 Lastly, as a gay Christian person, I bless
8 everyone in this room for being who they are and
9 respecting who we are. We all know that love is
10 patient and love is kind.

11 Thank you for supporting this ban.

12 (Speaker concludes speaking at timestamp
13 11:27 a.m. of DVD.)

14 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

15 Anyone else? Seeing none, what is the --

16 MR. MIRANDA: Close.

17 MS. CAPIN: -- pleasure of council?

18 Okay.

19 MR. COHEN: Second.

20 MS. CAPIN: Yes.

21 Moved by -- to close by Councilman Miranda,
22 second by Councilman Cohen.

23 All in favor?

24 (MULTIPLE VOICES: Aye.)

25 MS. CAPIN: Opposed?

1 (No response.)

2 MS. CAPIN: Okay. We close. We move on.

3 Yes, ma'am. You have something to say?

4 MR. SHELBY: May we have somebody read the
5 ordinance?

6 MS. CAPIN: No. That's what I was going to get
7 to.

8 MR. SHELBY: Oh, I'm sorry.

9 MS. CAPIN: I mean, we just closed it.

10 Okay. Thank you.

11 Yes. Councilman Maniscalco, will you take 88,
12 please?

13 MR. MANISCALCO: Thank you very much.

14 And before I read it I just want to say, I
15 remember something that I -- that I heard in church
16 from Monsignor Laurence Higgins a few years ago.
17 And of course, he passed away.

18 And he said, "Don't condemn anyone. Love them
19 and pray for them." And those words have always
20 stayed with me.

21 And I think of my favorite Bible verse, which
22 is John 13:34, and it says, "Jesus said, 'This is my
23 new commandment. Love one another as I have loved
24 you.'" Jesus loves unconditionally, so -- all
25 right. I think of those things.

1 And moving forward with this, I'll go ahead and
2 read the ordinance.

3 I have a substituted ordinance being presented
4 for second reading and adoption, an ordinance of the
5 City of Tampa, Florida, relating to the conversion
6 therapy on patients who are minors; making revisions
7 to the City of Tampa Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14;
8 offenses creating Article X, Sections 14-310-14-313;
9 amending Chapter 19, property maintenance and
10 structural standards; amending Section 19-4A2,
11 Department of Code Enforcement, duties and scope of
12 authority of the director; repealing all ordinances
13 or parts of ordinances in conflict therewith;
14 providing for severability; providing an effective
15 date.

16 MR. SUAREZ: Second.

17 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

18 We have a reading first by -- I'm sorry --
19 Councilman Maniscalco, second by Councilman Suarez.

20 This is a second reading, so we move on to
21 vote.

22 It doesn't want to operate with us today.

23 (Inaudible.)

24 THE CLERK: Miranda.

25 MR. MIRANDA: Yes.

1 THE CLERK: Reddick.

2 MR. REDDICK: Yes.

3 THE CLERK: Capin.

4 MS. CAPIN: Yes.

5 THE CLERK: Suarez.

6 MR. SUAREZ: Yes.

7 THE CLERK: Cohen.

8 MR. COHEN: Yes.

9 THE CLERK: Maniscalco.

10 MR. MANISCALCO: Yes.

11 THE CLERK: Viera.

12 MR. VIERA: Yes.

13 THE CLERK: Motion carried unanimously.

14 MS. CAPIN: Thank you.

15 (Excerpt concludes at timestamp 11:30 a.m. of

16 DVD.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH)

I, Michele Coburn, FPR, Stenographic Shorthand Reporter, Notary Public, State of Florida, CERTIFY that I was authorized to and did stenographically transcribe the foregoing proceedings from April 6, 2017, from a DVD-recorded proceeding; and that the transcript is a true and complete record to the best of my ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the attorneys or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 10th day of January, 2018.

Michele Coburn

MICHELE COBURN, FPR
Stenographic Shorthand Reporter
Notary Public, State of Florida