



Morgantown City Council
389 Spruce Street
Morgantown WV, 26505

August 31, 2021

Dear Morgantown City Council,

We the undersigned are members of the first-ever Appalachian Queer Youth Summit, a West Virginia-based summer camp for LGBTQ+ high school students and students from LGBTQ+ families. We are writing to encourage you to protect young people like us in your city by prohibiting licensed mental health providers from practicing so-called conversion therapy in Morgantown.

We acknowledge our privilege as young people who come from places of acceptance. In fact, we are not only accepted by our families; we are actively encouraged to be ourselves. That is sadly not the case for many of our friends within the LGBTQ+ community. We are disturbed to hear some officials say conversion therapy is no longer practiced. We want to assure you it is real and it is harmful.

Every major medical association denounces conversion therapy. Research shows LGBTQ+ people are 92 percent more likely to attempt suicide if they are exposed to conversion therapy. That's why 20 states and 70 municipalities have banned this practice. We hope West Virginia is added to that list soon, but in the meantime, we are counting on our municipal representatives to act. Morgantown would be the second West Virginia city to show this kind of bold and inclusive leadership and will set an example for other towns and cities.

We all know people are leaving West Virginia, especially young people. The LGBTQ+ community still lacks many protections statewide, and that only fuels our desires to leave

the state to find more accepting and diverse places to call home. Knowing our cities are doing all they can to make us feel welcome and protected gives us an incentive to stay here.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important ordinance. We hope Morgantown continues to be a leader in supporting young LGBTQ+ people. Please vote yes.

Sincerely,

Jamie, 17, Parkersburg
Abby, 16, Charleston
Emma, 16, Charleston
Micah, 18, Charleston
Terren, 17, Parkersburg
Arianna, 18, Terra Alta
Jaye, 18, South Charleston
Cecil, 18, Charleston
Gwendolyn, 15, Charleston
Ana, 17, Elkins
Sebastian, 17, Danville
Erin, 18, Charleston
Mykah, 16, St. Albans
Markus, 18, Morgantown