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# Why Conversion Therapy Hurts All of Us

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Summary: Amanda Simpson -- Executive Director of the U.S. Army Office of Energy Initiatives, and the first openly transgender woman Presidential appointee ever -- sent this message to the White House email list. Her message explains why "conversion therapy" is so harmful to all of us, and why it was important for the White House to stand up against the practice.

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*This afternoon, Amanda Simpson -- Executive Director of the U.S. Army Office of Energy Initiatives, and the first openly transgender woman Presidential appointee ever -- sent the following message to the White House email list. Her message explains why "conversion therapy" is so harmful to all of us, and why it was important for the White House to stand up against the practice.*

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Across the country, there are doctors working to convince people to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. It's known as "conversion therapy," but it could also be called brainwashing, or reprogramming.

Loving and compassionate parents and ministers who are trying to do the right thing are doing just the opposite. They are influenced by bad science, not grounded in fact. This so-called "conversion therapy" is harmful.

A couple of days ago, the White House came out in support of efforts to ban the use of conversion therapy. And as a transgender woman, this is especially personal to me.

No one should be forced to be someone they're not. Everyone should be valued for their authentic, true self -- who they are -- regardless of the gender with which they identify, or who they love.

I recently talked with a few other people in the Administration about why conversion therapy is so dangerous, and why it was so important for the White House to take a strong stance against the practice.

**Here's what we have to say:**

**Supporting a Ban on Conversion Therapy**



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This isn't just a transgender issue or an LGBT issue -- it's an American issue. Our nation was founded on the ideals of equality and acceptance for everyone, and forcing an individual to be someone they aren't goes directly against what this country stands for.

If we're going to grow as a society, we must move beyond the way things are, to the way things should be.

That's why I'm glad our Administration is standing up and making it clear that conversion therapy is unacceptable. Our society should allow every child and every person the freedom to be whoever they aspire to be.

And we've already seen the tragic effects of this therapy. Countless people have taken their own lives because they feel they can't fit into the standards that society demands. Others, although they haven't lost their lives, have been forced to live unfulfilled lives and to repress their feelings in the process -- feelings that come out in other ways that we can't always anticipate.

We can be better than this. We **are** better than this. We owe it to ourselves, and to all of the children growing up in this country, to work toward a society where everyone is accepted and treated equally.

**[I hope you'll take the time to listen to what we said, and learn more about why the White House came out in support of banning conversion therapy.](#)**

Thank you,

Amanda

Amanda Simpson  
Executive Director  
U.S. Army Office of Energy Initiatives

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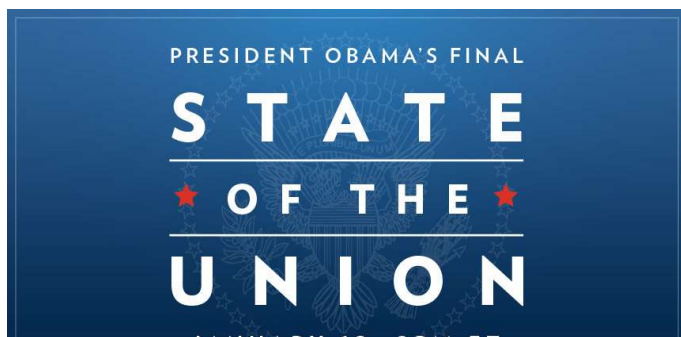
- [Read the "We the People" petition response on conversion therapy.](#)
- [Learn more about President Obama's Executive Order on LGBT workplace discrimination](#)



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