

# AFFIRMING BIRMINGHAM COALITION

affirmingbirminghamcoalition@gmail.com

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October 1, 2018

Mayor Randall Woodfin  
City of Birmingham  
710 20th St N  
Birmingham, AL 35203

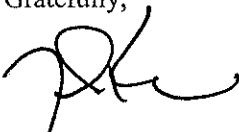
Dear Mayor Woodfin,

I am an undergraduate student writing on behalf Affirming Birmingham Coalition (ABC), a coalition of community leaders listed below. Representing a diverse coalition of local lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) organizations, mental health associations, youth advocacy groups, faith communities, medical federations and student societies, ABC humbly requests a meeting to discuss the possibility of ending conversion therapy in Birmingham.

Conversion therapy, as you may know, is the dangerous and discredited practice aimed at changing one's sexual orientation or gender identity. According to research from San Francisco State University, LGBTQ youth raised in unsupportive environments, like those of conversion therapy, are over eight (8) times more likely to attempt suicide than LGBTQ youth raised in supportive environments. They are also over three (3) times more likely than their peers to use illegal drugs and be at high risk for sexually transmitted diseases. Additionally, the American Psychological Association, World Health Organization, National Association of Social Workers, American Counseling Association and many other organizations have derided conversion therapy for its ineffectiveness and counterproductivity. In light of these glaring admonitions, fourteen (14) states and forty-three (43) municipalities have passed legislation prohibiting mental health professionals from practicing conversion therapy on minors.

ABC thanks you in advance for your consideration of a meeting during which we can share legal resources for ending conversion therapy in Birmingham. I am not a resident of your city, but I did spend fourteen (14) months of my adolescence, traveling to Birmingham for conversion therapy. Thus, this meeting could have life-saving implications, from Pratt City to Prattville; that is the cornerstone of my enthusiasm and the catalyst of this pursuit. An advocate and inspiration for young people across the nation, you have promised to invest in "all aspects of [young people's] lives, in every area that encourages and supports their growth and development." ABC feels that ending conversion therapy would be an excellent investment in "putting people first."

Gratefully,



Jordan Kramer

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Maha Ahmed  
UAB Political Science Club

Reggie Holder  
Highlands United Methodist Church

Dr. David Barnhart  
Saint Junia United Methodist Church

Dr. Frances Ivker  
Psychotherapist

Destiny Clark  
Central Alabama Pride

Amanda Keller  
Magic City Acceptance Center

Rev. Julie Conrady  
Unitarian Universalist Church

Karen Musgrove  
Birmingham Aids Outreach

Chris DaSambiagio-Moore  
Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling

Rev. Charles Perry  
Unity of Birmingham

Rev. Paul Eknes-Tucker  
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

Neil Rafferty  
Candidate for Alabama State House

Dr. Lara Embry  
Clinical Psychologist

Rev. Jennifer Sanders  
Beloved Community Church

Rev. J.R. Finney II  
Covenant Community Church

Monika Singletary  
Temple Emanu-El

Rev. Emily Freeman Penfield  
Woodlawn United Methodist Church

Dr. Angela Stowe  
UAB Student Counseling Services

Rev. Joe Genau  
Edgewood Presbyterian Church

Gayle Watts  
Children's Aid Society of Alabama

Rev. Cat Goodrich  
First Presbyterian Church Birmingham

Rev. R.G. Wilson-Lyons  
First Church Birmingham

Dr. Jane Hiles  
Birmingham Quakers Meeting

Rev. Stephanie York Arnold  
First United Methodist Church Birmingham

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