

Chairwoman and members of the committee, my name is
Becky Stockton and I represent my family and we live in Helena.

My family and I are against SB 198. It sounds good on the front to adopt anti-bullying policies, but when we put a special class of people in the list like sexual orientation, you manage to give special rights to certain individuals. We already have school policies set up by the Montana School Boards Association in regards to protecting all children from bullying, so why do we need this bill, because it directly is serving to protect sexual orientated individuals as a special class in our Montana Codes of Law.

I did some research and found out that this is a national trend by The National Center for Lesbian Rights, LAMBDA and GLSEN to put this legislation into every state. On the National Center for Lesbian Rights web site an article titled "Guidance for Drafting State and Safe Schools Legislation", I quote:

"Categories covered:

The statue should provide for protection from harassment and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

Ideally, gender identity or expression should be added as a separate category. But, if this is not possible, it can be included in the definition of sex, gender, or sexual orientation."

You can also look up a publication printed on 1/15/2002 titled: "A Guide to Effective Statewide Laws/Policies: Preventing Discrimination Against LGBT students in K-12 schools" (a joint publication by LAMBDA and GLSEN). These groups are not concerned about other students. Their agenda is to directly serve sexual orientated individuals as a special class of people that needs special protections.

Oklahoma's bill states that not just physical violence is considered bullying, but that they also included gestures and frowns, and fingers can be bullying. Where do you draw the line on this kind of stuff! I think you will be up to your neck in law suits if you do not protect all individuals.

This bill amounts to censorship of citizens, boy scouts and churches and their rights to condemn homosexuality and infringes on my children's and mine's free speech. This bill could be used against students and teachers who speak out against this behavior. Also if this bill were to be passed it would require sensitivity training, could open the door to discussions of sexual orientation to children who are too young to understand and also require to include this information into our children's curriculum; all without parental consent.

We send our children to school to learn the basic academics not moral issues. This can be handled in the parent's home. Also this would put more of a strain on the teacher's time to incorporate this into their curriculum which is very limited with all the other stuff they need to teach our students each and every day. By the way, will teachers need to get a law enforcement degree to handle these situations and what are the punishments to the children if they are caught bullying?

Please seriously think about the ratifications of passing this kind of legislation!!

Becky Stockton