

REPORT 3
DATE 1/26/05
HB 259

Good Morning Madam Chair and members of the committee.

For the record, I am Denise King. I am here in support of HB 259.

I have the honor of being the other half of the only couple in Montana who have had a Civil Union ceremony performed in Vermont. Our friends ask which one of us was civilized and which one was unionized.

As you heard earlier we have been together in a committed relationship for more than 25 years. Contrary to some chicken little's opinions: the sky has not fallen, the State of Montana continues to exist, no families have fallen part, our church continues to respect and honor all people and the walls have not coming tumbling down because of our relationship. There seems to be a need for some people to have a scapegoat for all the problems in our world. Often this is done in the name of religion. Let's move forward for equality and recognize that we have diverse families in Montana. We are part of the fabric of Montana. We are here; we can and do have a positive impact on other Montanans. Let today be the first of many "New Days for Montana" by the passage of this Civil Union Bill. Montanans have always cherished the thought that we are all individuals. Let's continue that tradition by honoring our differences and allowing each of us to be equal citizens who receive the benefits and protections of State by recognizing civil unions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions.