

EXHIBIT 11  
DATE 3/16/05  
SB 199

Support SB199, "Include Sexual Orientation in Discrimination Laws"  
Sponsor: Senator Ken Toole

My name is Cindy Otter. I am here on behalf of the Montana Chapter National Association of Social Workers. We have over 500 members statewide who hold themselves accountable to our Code of Ethics, which calls us to political and social action. Our Code of Ethics states, "Social Workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group or class on the basis of sexual orientation." It goes on to state that we will "promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people."

As a Social Worker I feel that protecting the rights of all humans is important. We do not have to look far to site incidents of discrimination against gay and lesbian individuals in the state of Montana, including the young man who was beaten and 'faggot' was spray painted on his belly here local at Carroll College. To the two female citizens of Missoula whose house was burned as they fought in court to obtain health insurance for their family. As a Montana native, I have resided in Montana for over 40 years. I know that many Montanans' take great pride in our rugged individualism, honesty, strength and spirit of fairness. I believe it is time to take this aspect of Montana's identity and stand up for the rights of all humans regardless of race, creed, religion, color, or national origin or because of age, physical or mental disability, martial status, sexual orientation or sex.

The cost of injustice is well stated by Martin Luther King who I quote:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" Please vote yes on SB199.

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