

MONTANA WOMEN'S LOBBY

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 7-~~1117~~

DATE 1-17-05

BILL NO. SB-198

Testimony in favor of SB 198
Requiring School Districts to Adopt Anti-Harassment Policies
January 17, 2005

SB 198 is the #1 priority for AAUW.

I will quote from the AAUW report, "Hostile hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School." The study surveyed more than 2,000 8th-11th graders in 1993 and again in 2000.

AAUW found that the largest increase in bullying was in anti-gay harassment. More than 60% of students knew someone who had faced anti-lesbian or gay bullying. 36% had faced it themselves. You know that not all these kids are gay or lesbian.

Of the kids who do self identify as gay or lesbian, the journal, "Pediatrics," reported on nearly 1/3 had been threatened with a weapon at school during the past month, compared to 7% of heterosexual students.

More than 1/3 also reported that no outside party ever intervened when homophobic remarks were made in their school environment.

As adults we don't have to deal with that level of harassment. We can come to work knowing that no one is going to shove our head in a toilet. We can be reasonable certain that no one is going to call us horrendous names. If we face a hostile work environment, we are covered by anti-harassment policies. We can do something about it.

We should offer the same for our children.

I urge your support for SB 198.