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HB 324

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On Wednesday, January 19, 2005 an incident occurred at Planned Parenthood in Billings, MT which I witnessed. At the time, I was a volunteer. I am presently employed by Planned Parenthood.

Three protesters were present on the morning of January 19, 2005. The protesters had pamphlets, a sign which measures approximately 6' x 3', and numerous smaller signs. The parking lot to the former Planned Parenthood facility is located behind a building that is located between the clinic and the parking lot. This means that the patients had to walk approximately 100-150 feet to enter the clinic. The protesters are not allowed on or to enter the Planned Parenthood property by order of an injunction presently in place. However, they are allowed on the sidewalk directly in front of the clinic since it is public property. At present, they are also allowed to come within inches of the patients as they arrive.

Four patients were in tears as they entered the Planned Parenthood facility due to the vocal harassment from the protesters. Two patients, I had to physically escort from the parking lot since they were stopped by the protesters when the protesters stepped in their path. The protesters were within 2-6 inches of the patients. On this particular day, I spoke to the protesters minimally as I was escorting a patient and her partner in. I told them that they could not block the sidewalk. They in turn, grabbed my arm and pushed me off of the sidewalk. This is assault. I remained calm. I told them they could not touch me and continued to escort the patient and her partner into the clinic. The protesters continued to verbally harass the patient and her partner while they made their way into the Clinic. They also continued their harassment of myself and the other escort present. This is just one example of the invasion of personal space and privacy created by not supporting the buffer bill.

Support the "Buffer" bill and support your constituents and their safety. Thank you for making a difference and keeping all of Montana safe.

Sarah Fredrickson