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I know first hand the financial, personal, emotional and physical damage that can result when school administrators, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Human Rights, Montana School Board Association, the Montana Education Association and the National Education Association put their own interests above the students, teachers and the taxpayers of the State of Montana. My files contain mountains of paperwork including depositions, declarations of truth, notarized documents and exhibits resulting from an arduous legal process that finally ended when the Havre (Montana) School District settled two lawsuits - a Federal suit and one filed in State District Court. These documents also include a letter from a union representative stating, "This is nothing more than a witch hunt." Yet the union continued to allow the school administration to harass, bully and bring harm to me.

These two lawsuits resulted from a single incident that, had it been handled differently and under the light of public scrutiny, would not have snowballed into awards of more than \$200,000 worth of damages. Funds that eventually came from the taxpayers' pockets. Ironically, as a taxpayer in Hill County, my family and I are helping to pay for the damages awarded to me. This covered the attorneys' fees. The settlement did not include my attorney fees, however the district, insurance and taxpayers paid the defendants attorney bills, which exceeded mine. The settlement was made on March 2, 2006.

I was a tenured teacher at Havre Middle School with a successful work history of nearly ten years. I was approached and harassed in my classroom by a mentally challenged and dangerous person during school hours. His speech and actions caused me fear that I would be raped, or worse. The administration's less-than-positive response to the situation eventually caused me to file a sexual harassment and hostile environment complaint. After making the complaint and following the chain of command within the school system with no results, I filed a Montana Human Rights Complaint with the Montana Human Rights Bureau. This was a dual filing with the EEOC.

Upon returning to work the next school year, I found hard-core pornographic emails on my school computer. When I reported these emails to the proper authorities, their response was that "keep quiet". When I asked them to trace the pornography, the administration replied that it couldn't be done.

As I pressed the issue, the administration's reaction was to try to find a way to get rid of me. They embarked upon a series of closed meetings with students and parents in an attempt to discover anything and everything they could use to build a case to terminate me. Students were taken from their class for meetings with the administration and were told to keep the discussions "a secret". While I was never allowed to meet with parents or students to discuss what were obviously fabrications, rumors were rampant.

Administration leaks were prevalent although I was continually told to keep silent I also received letters from administration threatening termination. These letters lacked a basis in fact and were simply threats.

Such a campaign can take a toll. Admittedly, my teaching suffered. I was afraid to discipline any student in fear that such an action would result in more closed meetings and threats of termination. Grades were questioned. Parents called and met with members of the administration. These meetings were either scheduled for times during which they knew I could not attend or simply held without notification. I was totally isolated. These are only the highlights of a year of harassment and intimidation. Naturally, my health suffered. At one point, I weighed 90 pounds and my physician prescribed medication for stress. In fact, he recommended that I take a leave of absence.

When I returned from that leave, my classroom was bare. My personal possessions were boxed. Student work had been removed, was missing or destroyed. Grades had been awarded in my name that I had not authorized. In response to all of this and other forms of harassment, my union representative said simply "They can do what they want. They're administration." Finally, I was terminated.

While doing discovery, I learned that members of the Montana Human Rights Commission, members of the school district's law firm, the Montana School Board Association and Montana Teachers Union all had political ties with the superintendent who terminated me. To make matters worse, he chairs the Board of Public Education. All of these people met to discuss my complaints against the administration. These meetings were not publicized and I was not in attendance.

During the same period in which I was under daily scrutiny and discipline, male employees were allowed to use corporal punishment, have inappropriate relationships with students and drink alcohol on school sporting trips. Other topics brought to the attention of the administration during this same period included the treatment of a Native American paraplegic paraprofessional and her Native American students

as well as the use of derogatory names referring to women, ethnic groups and special needs children. All these were dealt with behind closed doors. The public was never informed and no other teacher lost his job.

Even though I received a settlement, I have been blacklisted and cannot be employed in my chosen career. Sadly, I have lost my passion for classroom teaching and find myself fearful of those who work as administrators in the field of public education. This entire scenario could have been avoided had the school administration been willing to discuss openly and frankly the events that led to my filing the first grievance. It was filed only after the administration refused to listen to my concerns and only after I was told to "keep quiet". At one point, the administration represented me as a hysterical female whose problem might be "hormonal".

All this was done with union knowledge and while I was under a Collective Bargaining agreement. The union was in contact with the administration and was contacted by the administration. They did not protect me nor did they stand up for me. I believe this would not have happened had the Union done their job and not breached their contract with me. Again, these are only highlights.