

Testimony in Support of SB 454

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for the

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Hate crimes are serious and well-documented problems but remain inadequately recognized and addressed. The Montana Women's Lobby supports adding sexual orientation, gender identity, gender and disability to Montana's hate crimes statute.

There are very good reasons why women should be added to hate crimes law:

- * Crimes motivated by gender bias would be on the same footing as other civil rights violations.
- * This would acknowledge that an attack on one woman terrorizes all women.
- * The criteria used to identify gender based hate crimes would be the same as for other hate crimes. Only some assaults and property damage would qualify, particularly those by repeat assailants.

The Montana Women's Lobby believes the legislature has a role in preventing violence against people in all groups that have historically been subjected to bias-related violence.

We have special assault statutes for crimes against prisoners, family members, judges, police, sports officials, minors & even police dogs. The law should also cover crimes motivated by sexual orientation, gender.

Please pass hate crimes legislation that protects all Montanans.