

Good afternoon Chairman, members of the Committee.

My name is Kevin Casey, CASEY, I'm from Helena. I'm speaking today in support of SB 141.

Bullying was a part of my life as a student, as it has been for many.

I was a regular student in the Helena Public School System K through 10, but after my sophomore year I worked very hard to find an alternative learning environment as my school day hours had become increasingly degrading and intimidating.

I have dark memories of being de-pantsed in elementary school, spit on in middle school, and knocked down and threatened in high school. And I consider myself as having gotten off easily, what I endured barely compares to the life-changing experiences of several of my friends.

And though bullying contributed to my seeking out an alternative to public high school it was the administration's disinterest and apparent inability to respond to my situation that hardened my resolve to leave.

Although some commendable districts might be addressing the issue of bullying on their own, I support this bill because ALL of Montana's students deserve to have incidences of bullying appropriately and comprehensively addressed so that their time in the public school system can be free from ridicule, humiliation, and violence.

Thank you for your time.