

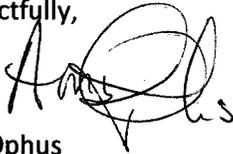
To the Senate Local Government Committee;

I am many things in life: combat veteran, college graduate, state employee, president of a nonprofit organization, mentor in Big Brothers Big Sisters, horrible cook, empathetic friend. I am proud of who I am, who I have become in this world. But when I get classified as a second-rate citizen not afforded the same rights as others, I start to question my pride. But not the pride in myself; I lose the pride I have for my state, for Montana.

Please understand that the Missoula ordinance and the Bozeman policy that HB516 would repeal are offering equal protection for the LGBT community against workplace and housing discrimination. No one is asking for special rights or special treatment, but simply equal and fair treatment for the LGBT population.

Montana is where I was born and raised. It is where I returned to after I had travelled the world. There is no question that I belong here; there is no other place like Montana. It's more than a home for me. Montana is my family. Like everyone who fought so hard in Missoula and Bozeman, like all of the opponents of HB 516, I am a child of Montana. We are your sons and daughters. We could very well move to another state that already recognizes our rights as equals. But we continue to stay and fight; we will always stay and fight. Because we love our family, Montana. We want our family to show us that it loves us back, that it will stand up and fight for its sons and daughters. Please vote against HB516.

Respectfully,



Amy Ophus  
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