

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 516

MARCH 14, 2011

Senates Local Govt. Comm.

Exhibit No. 27

Date ~~APRIL 14, 2011~~ COMMITTEE HEARING

Bill No. HB 516

THANK YOU MEMBERS OF THE SENATE LOCAL

My name is Katherine Marie Beckley. I'm a University of Montana graduate and have lived and worked in Missoula for more than 10 years. I have short hair and don't wear dresses. I was born and remain biologically female. There are many aspects of my personality, some of which people describe as feminine (I'm compassionate) or as masculine (I'm stubborn). My sex is female, my gender is neutral. I am not confused. But other people are sometimes confused and even angered by my appearance – angered by a by a woman who doesn't look like enough of a woman, angered by someone who doesn't fit *their* idea, *their* vision of what a woman should look like. Within the last year alone, in Missoula, I have twice been followed, cursed at and harassed. Once, on a Sunday afternoon I was crossing the pedestrian bridge into downtown where a group of 5 teenage boys were loitering. I walked by and they started murmuring all sorts of unspeakable, horrible words, proceeded to follow me and soon began yelling at me. Outnumbered and feeling somewhat threatened, I called the police and announced that I was doing so. After another block, they turned around and headed back towards the bridge.

~~Now this~~ ^{The} ordinance ^{that HB 516 seeks to nullify} would not directly affect that particular situation. What it ~~will do~~ ^{does}, is require people who are angered by my gender because they don't think it properly matches my sex, to check those feelings at the door when they walk into work or a public place. It does not require favoritism, but neutrality and objectivity. It requires that an employer consider my resume, education and experience instead of whether or not I wear heels and makeup.