



Montana Women Vote  
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Senate Local Govt. Comm.  
Exhibit No. 30  
Date 3-14-2011  
Bill No. HB 516

March 14, 2011

Chairman Sonju and Members of the Local Government Committee,

Montana Women Vote (MWV) would like to express our opposition to HB 516, sponsored by Representative Hansen.

MWV is a coalition organization that works statewide to and engage women at all levels of our democracy. As an organization that is dedicated to the rights, safety, and full participation of women throughout Montana, we strongly oppose HB 516.

Montana Women Vote supports the Missoula Non-Discrimination Ordinance because it protects people who live, work, or visit the City of Missoula from discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations based on their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Our state office is located in Missoula and the ordinance provides necessary protections to our staff, supporters, and broader community.

Discrimination based on one's sexual orientation or gender identity is very real and documented in our community. And as a community we were able to create policies that meet our needs of all Missoulians. We must ensure that Missoula and other municipalities across Montana maintain their same ability to create public policies that meet the needs of their people.

Furthermore, as you are aware, violence against women in our society is a real issue and one that we hope policy makers and community members continue to address. Ordinances like this one, which offer protections to individuals who experience discrimination in society, help prevent violence against lesbians and transgender women.

We respectfully urge a NO vote on HB 516.

Sincerely,

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