

PROTECTING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF ALL MONTANANS

STRENGTHENING MONTANA COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE



BIG SKY
Brighter Future

Charting the course for a better Montana.

Every person should live with equity, dignity, and freedom.
To secure human rights for all, Montana should:

- Amend the Montana Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community in housing, employment, education, and public accommodations and
- Ban conversion therapy



“Most Montanans agree that people shouldn’t be denied housing or employment because they are LGBTQ. However, most people don’t realize that not only are there no legal protections against this kind of discrimination, it happens on a regular basis.”

Shawn Reagor,
Montana Human Rights Network

HOW WE GOT HERE

There is no statewide law prohibiting discrimination or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, leaving many of our neighbors at risk of persecution, stigma, and exclusion. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender non-conforming (LGBTQ+) Montanans are frequently denied housing, treated unfairly in their jobs, and refused services simply because of who they are. Although five Montana cities, the state government, and our public universities prohibit discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, without statewide anti-discrimination laws, protections are limited. Including sexual orientation and gender identity or expression into the Montana Human Rights Act affirms our commitment to the safety, security, and well-being of all our family, friends, and community members.

Montana has no law that protects adults and children against “conversion therapy,” a practice that attempts to change sexual orientation or gender identity through techniques like shaming, electric shocks, and hypnosis. This widely discredited practice has no scientific basis and is traumatic for those subjected to it. The risks are greatest for children, who are more likely to attempt suicide, experience depression, and face rejection by their families.

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ON THE HORIZON

1

Amend the Montana Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community in housing, employment, education, and public accommodations. Montana should amend the Montana Human Rights Act to explicitly prohibit discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. As it stands, the Act bans discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, financial services, and education based on race, religion, color, sex, disability, age, and national origin. Including LGBTQ+ community members among protected classes will provide legal recourse when their civil rights are violated and strengthen trust in our state to take care of all its residents.

2

Ban conversion therapy. Montana should join the 19 states and the District of Columbia that ban or limit conversion therapy, especially for children who are most vulnerable to lasting trauma when subjected to abuse. Montana should prohibit using taxpayer dollars for conversion therapy practices delivered by state-licensed and religious professionals and allow for licensing boards to discipline those who violate the law. Finally, Montana should classify conversion therapy as consumer fraud and bring enforcement actions against providers that offer or advertise these fraudulent services.



ABOUT BIG SKY BRIGHTER FUTURE

Big Sky Brighter Future is charting a clear course to rebuild our state. This concrete plan for lawmakers has specific proposals to help families, workers, children, and communities, and creates a tax code that works for everyone. Montana cannot go back to the time when families faced barriers to build their best future. We can move our state forward and make it one where we can all live, work, and enjoy all Big Sky Country has to offer. There's a better Montana on the horizon, and this is how we get there.