

FLATHEAD VALLEY ALLIANCE



NOVEMBER 2009



We wanted to share some good news on this Thursday afternoon. **An expansion of the federal hate crimes statute that is inclusive of the LGBTI community, passed the Senate today!** It was attached to a Department of Defense appropriations bill. The bill is now on its way to President Obama for his signature.

It has been a long fight to achieve hate crimes protections for the LGBTI community, and this is a major step toward a society where everyone is safe to fully participate in their community!

The [New York Times](#) reports on the vote:

"The Senate voted on Thursday to extend new federal protections to people who are victimized

because of their gender or sexual orientation, bringing the legislation close to reality after years of fierce debate. The 68 -29 vote sends the measure to President Obama, who has said he supports it."

And from the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce:

"Together we rejected efforts to protect some but not all by demanding that gender identity be included in the law. And you spoke out - loudly and clearly - against efforts to twist hate crimes protections into an excuse to expand the injustice of the death penalty."

Enjoy this victory, it's an important one! We'll keep you posted on the next steps in the fight for equality!

Sincerely,
Kim

Contact the FVA at www.FlatheadValleyAlliance.org or FVA, PO Box 2815, Kalispell, MT 59903-2815 or leave message at 406-756-6707

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Victory! Montana Supreme Court Upholds Same-Sex Parenting!

Article from Montana Human Rights Network [www.mhrn.org]

“Every person in Montana is entitled to human dignity, every person in Montana is entitled to individual privacy; and every person in Montana is entitled to seek happiness in all lawful ways. These are fundamental rights guaranteed, by the Montana Constitution, and no person may be denied these elemental, natural rights because of his or her sexual orientation.”

Supreme Court of Montana Upholds Lesbian Mom’s Right to Parent Her Own Children

The Montana Supreme Court today [10/6/09] affirmed Michelle Kulstad’s right to continue to parent her children as she has done since they were toddlers.

Michelle Kulstad, represented by her own lawyer and the ACLU of Montana, has been fighting for the right to parent her own children since separating with her long-time and co-parent Barbara Maniaci in 2007. The children were legally adopted by Michelle’s former partner Ms. Maniaci, due to legal limitations in Montana for same-sex couples who wish to adopt.

Maniaci was represented by the right-wing legal organization, Alliance Defense Fund (ADF). The ADF opposes same-sex marriage, the separation of church and state, abortion, and sex education in schools. The ADF works “to counter the promotion of the homosexual agenda and express an opposing viewpoint from a Christian perspective” by representing ex-gay and “reformed” gay litigants such as Maniaci.

The Court concluded last year, however, that Michelle Kulstad had presented clear and convincing evidence of her parent-child relationship with both of her children and was awarded shared custody. A parenting plan was created and after a series of psychologically-based testimony was heard, Michelle Kulstad was deemed a “loving and stable force in the children’s lives.”

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A Quotation(s) from the Opinion of the Supreme Court

Supreme Court Justice James C. Nelson,

“This case represents yet another instance in which fellow Montanans, who happen to be lesbian or gay, are forced to battle for their fundamental rights to love who they want, to form intimate associations, to form family relationships, and to have and raise children—all elemental, natural rights that are accorded, presumptively and without thought or hesitation, to heterosexuals...

I remain absolutely convinced, nonetheless, that homosexuals are entitled to enjoy precisely the same civil and natural rights as heterosexuals as a matter of constitutional law...

I am convinced that until our courts, as a matter of law, accept homosexuals as equal participants with heterosexuals in our society, each person with the same civil and natural rights, lesbian and gay citizens will continue to suffer homophobic discrimination. Regrettably, this sort of discrimination is both socially acceptable and politically popular...**discrimination of the basis of sexual orientation is an expression of bigotry...**

Every person in Montana is entitled to human dignity, every person in Montana is entitled to individual privacy; and every person in Montana is entitled to seek happiness in all lawful ways. These are fundamental rights guaranteed, by the Montana Constitution, no person may be denied these elemental, natural rights because of his or her sexual orientation.

That lesbian and gay people still must fight for their fundamental rights is antithetical to the core of values of Article II 9of the Montana Constitution) and speaks, in unfortunate clarity, of a prevalent societal cancer ground in bigotry and hate.”

Would you like to become a member of, or donate to the Montana Human Rights Network?

Click the link below to make an online contribution:

<http://mhrn.org/joincontribute.html>

November 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

November 2009

November 3—FVA Monthly Meeting—Kalispell
Main Library 7—9 pm

November 28—FVA Monthly Dance@ 8pm—
Eagles—upstairs ballroom

NOTE: CHECK WEBSITE FOR CURRENT INFO

December 2009

December 1—FVA Monthly Meeting—Kalispell
Main Library 7—9 pm

December 12— Christmas Party—see website for
details

December 31—New Years Eve Dance—upstairs ball-
room—Eagles @ 8 pm

December 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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