



HUMAN RIGHTS

Position Statement

Adopted 10/19/82

Revised 10/24/89, 10/18/84 and 10/25/05

The Montana Association of Churches supports:

Laws in society that:

- recognize that all persons are created with essential rights,
- promote the opportunity for every person to be treated justly; and
- promote whatever upholds human dignity.

A strong, independent and fully-funded State Human Rights Commission empowered to:

- provide an on-going assessment of the people's realization of human rights;
- identify contemporary manifestations of injustice or denial of these rights; and,
- implement programs, policies and statutes that address injustice, harassment or denial of rights in overt, clandestine or insidious policies or practices.

Supporting Statement

Our Theological Understanding

The Montana Association of Churches speaks from a Judeo-Christian ethic which holds that all persons are of unique and special worth, created by God to live in justice and freedom. We seek equal

protection and honor of human dignity through human rights legislation, by which we promote the Biblical mandate to live in just relationships in a caring human community that affirms each person's human dignity.

Because we recognize that the securing of equal protection and advocacy for all is an unfinished task we must continually seek to identify systems, practices, policies and groups that diminish the worth of persons or groups and that devalue life by denying basic human rights.

It is the emphatic position of Montana Association of Churches that any threats, bullying, malicious speech or writing, or acts of violence against **any person** is a violation of God's will. MAC condemns such actions as a denigration of the human person, each of whom deserves dignity as one created in the image of God.

Contemporary Concerns (that call for a faith response)

Some contemporary trends are alarming:

- the growing "underclass" of persons in society who are excluded from full participation in society due to educational, cultural, economic, physical/mental status, gender, religious or political circumstances
- the activities of neo-fascist and white supremacist groups which prey on persons who are victims of economic and social crises such as farm and rural crises
- the rise of malicious and violent harassment in this regions of our country;
- acts of discrimination and prejudice against person based on age, economic religion, gender, and differing physical and mental abilities, in the areas of housing, employment, financing and credit, education and public accommodation.

Our Response

MAC has a wide range of concerns in protecting and strengthening human rights for Montanans. We urge all communities of faith to be diligent in identifying injustice and harassment in our government, communities and our own churches. We favor the identification and redress of failures to ensure full accessibility and availability to the protection of guaranteed human rights, including the recording of and reporting by law enforcement of instances of human rights violations or malicious harassment. We favor augmenting the Montana criminal code to more effectively address and prosecute crimes of malicious harassment and racial/religious violence. We favor development and implementation of programs of public education and training for action to eliminate injustice of all forms in all areas of our life together.

Montana Association of Churches

American Baptist Churches of the Northwest * Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in Montana
 Episcopal Church Diocese of Montana * Evangelical Lutheran Church in America-Montana Synod
 Presbyterian Church (USA)-Glacier Presbytery * Presbyterian Church (USA)-Yellowstone Presbytery
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Great Falls-Billings * Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena
 United Church of Christ of Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference * United Methodist Church Yellowstone Conference