



## Claire Babcock

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**Issue** In my hometown of Bozeman, Montana, many people are denied access to jobs, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of their gender identity, expression, or sexual orientation. This discrimination presents a threat to the well-being of the community, creating economic consequences and making the town an unsafe and unwelcoming space. A nondiscrimination ordinance is needed.

**Project Description** During the campaign for the nondiscrimination ordinance, I helped the organization Forward Montana, a nonpartisan group that involves young people in government. I held banners, made buttons, and spoke with people inside and outside of city hall. The key message of all supporters of the ordinance was simple: discrimination on any basis is unjust, and a city-wide policy change will help reduce that discrimination and send a message to members of the community that they are safe and welcome in Bozeman. I sat through hours of city council meetings, listening to opposition that ranged from reasonable to hateful. I also heard brave testimony from friends and fellow citizens of Bozeman, discussing the discrimination they had faced.

**Project Outcome** The city council unanimously voted for the ordinance, but it has not been without challenge. (Religious groups plan to sue the city.) I will always fight for nondiscrimination, and I will continue to work with Forward Montana, registering voters. It's my belief that the more people are involved in their government, the more their leaders will defend them and turn their needs into policies.

**Request** What action can we take to make this ordinance statewide?