

MIRA
Montana Immigrant and Refugee Advocates

March 17, 2021

Dear Governor Gianforte,

On behalf of Montana Immigrant and Refugee Advocates (MIRA) which includes the ACLU of Montana, Montana Human Rights Network, Montana Women Vote, The Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Planned Parenthood of Montana, The Montana Association of Christians, Soft Landing Missoula, and multiple independent immigration attorneys licensed to practice in Montana, we respectfully request that you veto House Bill 200.

Montana needs leadership that tones down unfounded fears and promotes policy that helps all Montanans prosper. House Bill 200 does just the opposite. Instead, this bill traffics in fear, fanning the flames of harmful rhetoric and undermining local control. All this to solve a problem that does not exist in our state, where not a single 'sanctuary city' has been declared.

While this bill wouldn't solve any problems, it would create plenty. This legislation would criminalize immigrant communities, jeopardize public safety, and undermine the ability of local police to combat crime and safeguard against racial profiling. That's not the Montana we know and love, and this isn't how we get Montana back to work.

Immigrants in Montana take part in a long tradition of coming to the United States in search of a better life, freedom and opportunity. These immigrants are our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends and family, and they deserve to be treated with the same decency and respect as any other Montanan. Legislation like this falls far short of that mark, using these members of our community as pawns for scoring political points and ignoring the vital role that they play in our economy and our communities.

I hope you'll see fit to stand up for the strangers and sojourners in our midst and reject House Bill 200.

Sincerely,

Sam Forstag, Legislative Program Manager
ACLU of Montana

Cosigned:

Diane Magone, Co-Chair
Treasure State Values

Kelsen Young, Executive Director
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Travis McAdam, Program Director
Montana Human Rights Network

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Montana Women Vote

Randall Caudle, Attorney
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Mary Poole, Executive Director
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Gloria Soja, MAC Assistant
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