

### **Locker Room Privacy Initiative – Press Distortions**

The following is a guest editorial written by Jeff Laszloffy, President/CEO of the Montana Family Foundation. Please feel free to publish it if you think it's of interest.

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Recently the Billings Gazette and the Bozeman Chronicle printed false statements. They exemplify the reasons President Trump and others use the term “fake news” to describe the mainstream media.

The Montana Locker Room Privacy Act is a ballot initiative for which Montanans are currently gathering signatures. It requires schools and other government buildings to have separate locker rooms and showers for boys and girls, and keep each private from the opposite sex.

On August 6, the Gazette published a guest editorial by the ACLU that said the Locker Room Privacy Act constitutes “criminalizing caregiving.” The premise of this editorial was that, under the Locker Room Privacy Act, male caregivers might not be allowed to help females who needed assistance using the rest room, or vice versa.

That is demonstrably false.

This is the exact wording of the Locker Room Privacy Act: “Nothing in this section may be construed to prohibit a governmental entity from: adopting a policy necessary to accommodate a disabled person in need of physical assistance or a minor in need of physical assistance when using a protected facility.”

There it is, in black and white. The editorial written by the ACLU is factually incorrect. It is false. It is, as some would say, fake news.

The same day the Gazette ran an editorial from their editorial board, that encouraged Montanans not to sign the ballot petitions.

In that Gazette opinion, the editorial board claimed the Locker Room Privacy Act would cause Montana schools to lose federal funding.

Once again, false.

President Obama’s administration issued a proclamation that schools must let boys who think they’re girls use the girls’ locker room. However, President Trump rescinded that directive. So federal funding is not at stake.

Apparently unsatisfied with how badly they had misled the public so far, the Gazette continued with one of the most discredited ideas of the year: protecting locker room privacy harmed the North Carolina economy.

North Carolina passed a similar law requiring that men use the restroom for men and women use the restroom for women. The Gazette cites an Associated Press estimate that North Carolina's economy lost \$3.7 billion dollars.

But they leave out one critical fact.

That amount is over twelve years -- more than a decade! -- while North Carolina's economy is nearly \$500 billion dollars in a single year, not 12. So when ideologically driven activists like the Gazette editorial board tell you North Carolina lost \$3.7 billion by protecting locker room privacy, here's what they're actually saying.

The state is estimated to have lost \$308 million per year in a \$500 billion economy. Protecting privacy cost North Carolina less than one half of one tenth of one percent per year.

Not even a percentage point. Not even a blip. In fact, quite the opposite. North Carolina's tourism industry is booming, and according to Forbes and Site Selection Magazines they remain the second-best place in the U.S. to do business.

But the falsehoods of the Gazette pale in comparison to the works of fiction published in the Bozeman Chronicle. According to their editorial, these are the arguments of the Montana Family Foundation for the Locker Room Privacy Act:

"Many voters will be tempted to reflexively sign after hearing the hyper-emotional appeal of supporters. 'These people' are targeting our children. 'These people' are different from us. 'These people' can't be trusted."

Not one person at the Montana Family Foundation ever said that.

Those words -- printed inside quotation marks -- have not been spoken by any person affiliated with the drive to pass I-183.

If inventing fictional words and putting them in quotation marks isn't fake news, what is?

When you cut through all the falsehoods and ideologically driven misdirection, the bottom line is this:

High school girls should not be required to shower with a boy, even if he thinks he's a girl. It's just common sense.