

ALAN K. SIMPSON



United States Senator (Ret.)
WYOMING

February 19, 2015

To my friends and former colleagues in the Wyoming State Legislature:

Like you, I always knew when the toughest legislative voting starts – like now! And always the toughest part for me was voting for something that was very right, even though I didn't agree with it. You have one in front of you now – SF115. It isn't about gays, it isn't about gay marriage, it isn't about special rights or privileges – it isn't about religion – it's about fairness and kindness.

Please look carefully at some of the complaints of gay/lesbians presented to the Wyoming labor folks as to what actual discrimination has taken place against them in Wyoming's workplace. How about the one of tying a naked gay guy to the front of a truck and playing "chicken" with him? How about shitting in a gay guy's lunchbox? That doesn't sound like Wyoming to me – nor should it to you. So, I earnestly hope you will take a good close look at this one because if we continue to discriminate against gays and lesbians in ANY form – whether you like the issue – or them – or not – we will severely hurt our workforce and punish our State in the eyes of the nation. With the decline in oil and gas, and the war on coal, we'd best be ready to hire on anybody from anywhere for one reason alone – because they can do the job. If they can't, fire 'em, if they do – you keep 'em. It's that simple. Live and let live – and live and let work.

And don't forget, the bill says "qualified worker." That's the only test.

I am so very disappointed to hear some extremists in the Catholic faith in Wyoming overreact and shamefully use words about those being protected in a labor bill as being "perverts" when so many churches, including theirs, have dealt so well with helping working people so they can provide a living, pay their taxes, feed and clothe themselves and their families. Our son Bill and his wife Deb are very devout Catholics and our granddaughter will be married at Notre Dame in June in the Basilica. We don't talk about abortion and gay-lesbian issues out of love and respect for each other. And no church is free of criticism as to "deviations." Be most careful in the casting of stones.

This an employment bill – period. Do we want these folks unemployed and then find ourselves paying taxpayers money to stay in that status? Wouldn't we rather have them working hard, qualified and paying their fair share? Again, it's not about gay marriage. It is not an approval of gay lifestyles. It's not about religion. It's about qualified workers doing willing work in a productive right-to-work state.

I know it's one that sticks in your craw but bullying and harassment have never been part of any of my employment experiences in Wyoming – all the way back to when I went to work at the Cody Bakery at age 15!

God Bless you all – from a fellow former Wyoming Legislator.

Friend,

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