Hired Gun for Anti-Trans Bathroom Bills:
Peddling Fear & Promoting Homophobia for the Religious Right

Kaeley Triller Haver
The Montana Human Rights Network is a grassroots, state-based human rights non-profit organization working to promote democratic values such as pluralism, equality and justice; challenge bigotry and intolerance; and organize communities to speak out in support of democratic principles and institutions. The Network uses a multi-faceted approach to expand the base for human rights in Montana, including pursuing progressive public policy, exposing the Radical Right, and supporting local community organizing.

The Network has researched and reported on the activities of the Radical Right for more than 25 years. To learn more about this work, please visit our website at https://mhrn.org/right-wing-research/. You can find more of the Network’s reports and issue briefs here: https://mhrn.org/resources/.
Women’s rights leaders, along with the Montana Human Rights Network, are concerned that the state’s most notable anti-LGBTQ organization has launched a campaign that ignores sexual and domestic violence experts, along with academic data on violence against women, to shift blame to LGBTQ people. This effort rehashes antiquated and hateful beliefs that equate the LGBTQ community with deviant criminals.

To raise funds and kickoff its anti-trans ballot initiative campaign, the Montana Family Foundation (MFF) featured Washington State’s Kaeley Triller Haver as a speaker at banquets in Bozeman and Billings in October 2017. In advertising Triller Haver as the speaker on Facebook, MFF included a link to a video by the Alliance Defending Freedom that features her anti-trans message (see “Working with Hate Groups” on page 8 for more information).

MFF is the most prominent Religious Right group in Montana. Formed in 2004, its roots go back to the 1990’s Christian Coalition of Montana. MFF has been a consistent presence at the Montana Legislature opposing reproductive freedom, LGBTQ equality, and public education.1

Currently, MFF is a state affiliate of the Family Research Council, which the Southern Poverty Law Center designates a hate group. MFF is currently trying to qualify a measure for the ballot that attacks the privacy and safety of the LGBTQ community, which is similar to legislation it failed to get the Montana Legislature to pass during the 2017 session.2

The Montana Human Rights Network is incredibly troubled that MFF brought Triller Haver to Montana to launch its anti-trans campaign. She is a right-wing activist who has made a national name for herself by co-opting women’s rights messaging to oppose trans-inclusive policies. She has been an integral part of two failed ballot initiative campaigns in Washington to overturn trans equality that have involved questionable tactics.

Linking its Montana campaign to Triller Haver once again illustrates that MFF will use any means necessary to achieve its bigoted agenda and use Montana as a testing ground for anti-LGBTQ strategies.

Background on “Bathroom Bills”

Over the past few years, Kaeley Triller Haver has rocketed to stardom in the Religious Right’s efforts to discriminate against the trans community by passing so-called “bathroom” or “locker room” legislation. While the language and scope of these
Kaeley Triller Haver got her start opposing trans-inclusive policies while working at the YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties in Washington. The organization adopted an inclusive policy, which led to Haver leaving her job in protest. This photo from the Seattle Times shows her at a protest against the YMCA.

Policies can vary, the bedrock of them makes it illegal for trans people to use restrooms and other such facilities that match their gender identity and, instead, forces trans folks to unsafely use the facilities that match the gender markers on their original birth certificates.

Following the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2015 ruling that legalized same-sex marriage, the Religious Right quickly pivoted to efforts to criminalize the trans community. Groups like the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) began pushing out draft legislation that focused this anti-trans sentiment on bathrooms, locker rooms, and other such facilities. Policymaking bodies from the local to state levels began considering these anti-trans policies and, in some instances, passing them.

Perhaps the most well-known occurrence was North Carolina’s House Bill 2, which the state’s legislature passed in 2016. The law mandated that trans people use the bathroom that corresponds with the gender they were assigned at birth, and it blocked local governments from passing trans-inclusive policies. As a result of HB 2, North Carolina stood to lose $4.8 billion in federal funding and over $40 million in business investment.

Kaeley Triller Haver’s involvement with the anti-trans movement began in 2015 while she was working as the Communications Director for the YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties in Washington. The organization decided to adopt policies clarifying that trans members could use the locker rooms corresponding to their gender identity. Triller Haver was asked to draft some talking points about the policy change. According to Triller Haver, she told her boss she wouldn’t do it, and the YMCA responded that she could resign, keep quiet, and receive severance pay, or she would be fired. Triller Haver says she had to speak out against the policy change, so she quit.

Central to her opposition to trans-inclusive policies, Triller Haver always explains that she is a survivor of sexual violence, even though her personal story lacks a connection to these policies. When it comes to sexual violence in these types of public facilities, the reality is that it is trans people who experience harassment and violence. An article published in the *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy* found that 70% of trans people reported being denied entrance, being harassed, or being assaulted when attempting to use a public restroom.

Soon after leaving the YMCA, Triller Haver became the Communications Director for Just Want Privacy, a statewide group seeking to repeal a trans-inclusive policy that was established by the Washington Human Rights Commission. In late 2015, the Commission adopted a rule allowing people to access bathrooms, locker rooms, and other gender-specific facilities in accordance with their gender identity. Triller Haver and Just Want Privacy have been part of two failed statewide ballot initiatives and multiple unsuccessful legislative attempts to repeal the law.
Blog Post Leads to National Profile

Shortly before leaving the YMCA, Triller Haver authored a column titled “A Rape Survivor Speaks Out About Transgender Bathrooms.” Published by The Federalist, the piece outlined her personal story of surviving sexual violence as a child, including an inference that sexual predators benefit most from trans-inclusive policies. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence has denounced this type of statement, which is frequently used by Religious Right groups, calling it the “bathroom predator myth.”

“Over 200 municipalities and 18 states have non-discrimination laws protecting transgender people’s access to facilities consistent with the gender they live every day,” stated the Task Force. “None of those jurisdictions have seen a rise in sexual violence or other public safety issues due to non-discrimination laws. Assaulting another person in a restroom or changing room remains against the law in every single state.”

Triller Haver’s Federalist article went viral in right-wing circles and launched her career as a go-to speaker for Religious Right groups pushing anti-trans “bathroom bills.” Her appeal as a speaker is understandable.

Her heartbreaking and horrifying story of suffering sexual violence as a child should be addressed through policies and services. Her appeal to political right-wing activists isn’t so much about their care for women’s rights. Instead her claim that sexual predators exploit trans-inclusive policies plays into traditional beliefs of the Religious Right. While opposing equal rights for women, a key component of the Religious Right is a paternalistic worldview in which women need to be protected and sheltered from the outside world. The way Triller Haver tells her personal story of abuse lends itself to this framework.

Also, by equating trans-inclusive policies with sexual predators, she taps into the Religious Right’s long-held mantra of falsely equating members of the LGBTQ community with sexual predators and deviants. The notion that trans people are somehow dangerous has been debunked numerous times.

As an article in the New England Journal of Medicine states, “Although transgender people have been characterized as dangerous, it is transgender people who have generally been the victims of verbal harassment and physical assaults when trying to use public bathrooms.”

The Religious Right has found a small group of women, including Triller Haver, who have survived sexual violence and are willing to tie that to the fight against trans-inclusive policies. Professionals within the anti-violence movement have questioned the dynamics of this relationship.

A column by a leader of FORGE, an anti-trans violence group, noted that these women are no doubt experiencing signs of long-term trauma; however, instead of helping them access supportive services, Religious Right groups are exploiting them as part of an anti-trans campaign.

Loree Cook-Daniels detailed in the column how Kaeley Triller Haver’s national profile fighting trans-inclusive policies began with this article she wrote for the right-wing publication The Federalist in 2015.
Religious Right groups are not interested in genuinely helping the survivors of sexual violence by supporting other policy and education campaigns to highlight or fund services. Instead, these groups are “picking out just the one type of sexual assault that meets their needs.” She also pointed out that these exploited survivors of sexual violence were not attacked by trans people; however, their stories are being used to promote the false narrative that banning trans people from certain public spaces is a safety issue.13

“As a former prosecutor and criminal appellate defense attorney for nearly 20 years, I can safely say that no case exists where a transgender person has ever sexually assaulted, molested, or attacked another person in a bathroom or changing room in Montana - ever!” says Roberta Zenker, a practicing attorney and author of numerous pieces about gender identity and expression, including TransMontana: A Memoir of Transformation in Body, Mind, and Spirit. “Any person who engages in such a heinous act could, and should, be arrested and prosecuted under existing assault, sex, and child endangerment crimes.”

Zenker highlights one of the false arguments made by anti-trans efforts when it comes to public spaces like locker rooms and bathrooms. Groups like the Montana Family Foundation make it sound like, without anti-trans policies, there are no legal protections for people assaulted in these public facilities. The reality is there are already laws in place outlawing assault, endangerment, and other forms of abuse that would apply to the fear-based scenarios concocted by anti-trans groups.

**Stump Speech Goes Far and Wide: Protecting Women Through Trans Discrimination**

Her blog post for The Federalist served as the launching pad to Triller Haver’s current status in the anti-trans movement. She’s now featured at right-wing events around the country, and her writing consistently shows up in publications directed at the same constituency.

The Federalist post began Triller Haver’s stint as a contributor to that right-wing online publication, which spends much of its time promoting anti-LGBTQ causes.14 The Federalist launched in 2013 and is headed by Ben Domenech, a former Bush Administration staffer and right-wing blogger probably best known for losing his job at the Washington Post due to plagiarism.15 The Equality Project has called The Federalist “a reliable apologist for anti-LGBT discrimination” that “defends draconian anti-gay bigotry in the name of liberty.”16

As her right-wing profile has grown, Triller Haver has used both her writing and speaking gigs to refine her stump speech, which includes her personal story, opposition to trans-inclusive policies, musings on religion, and derogatory remarks about the trans community and other progressive causes.

She claims that the YMCA “colluded” with the Washington Human Rights Commission when it came to enacting a statewide trans-inclusive policy, because the Commission needed to have a “Christian organization championing it [change in law] for them.”17

When talking about the YMCA, she stresses that she left her job to speak out against trans-inclusive policies, often saying something to the effect that she could live without a job but not without a clean conscience.18 Framing her departure from the YMCA like this allows Triller Haver to be a martyr for standing up to the “wrong type of Christians.” The Religious Right’s ideology is not simply about applying Christian values and morals to the public debate. Instead, it pits sects of Christianity against each other by narrowly defining the right type of Christian values in order to gain power for a select few.

How much Triller Haver discusses her religious views tends to vary depending on the audience; however, she has introduced herself as a “conservative Christian woman.”19 She has framed bathroom
battles as not “primarily a political issue” but a “spiritual one.” In a column posted on the website for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association about bathroom policies, she wrote about the sin of being LGBTQ and urged pastors to help convert LGBTQ people to ultra-conservative forms of Christianity in hopes of changing their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Triller Haver clearly directs her message to a very conservative and fundamentalist version of Christianity. Under the umbrella that is the Christian faith, there are denominations that don’t share these anti-trans views.

As Reverend Michael Mulberry of Billings First Congregational Church explains, the Scriptural basis for trans people can be found in Genesis. He notes that the creation in Genesis Chapter 2 describes the well-known story of God creating Adam and Eve. However, in Genesis Chapter 1, Adam is created alone as male and female, in the image of God as an androgyne.

Furthermore, Mulberry says many Christian and Jewish traditions understood that Eden and Paradise would only return when gender was transcended or disappeared. Very different from the likes of Triller Haver, he says his faith recognizes “the spectrum, the diversity through which God operates in the world in our sexuality and gender.” Mulberry’s point culminates in the earliest baptismal formula from the Christian tradition, the Apostle Paul writing, “In Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female.”

Sometimes Triller Haver claims she has empathy for trans people, but she will quickly follow with a statement like “it is nothing short of negligent to instate policies that elevate the emotional comfort of a relative few over the physical safety of a large group of vulnerable people.”

Triller Haver operates from the standpoint that a community can either protect women and children, or it can grant trans folks equal rights. In her view, there is no ability to do both, so she resorts to a common Religious Right tactic and minimizes the presence of trans people in communities. She would “rather risk hurting a small number of people’s feelings” than risk “jeopardizing the safety of thousands of women and kids with a policy that gives would-be predators a free pass.” Repeatedly, Triller Haver offers the false choice of being able to either protect women or have trans-inclusive policies.

The linkage Triller Haver makes between trans-inclusive policies and increases in attacks doesn’t happen in the real world. In addition to looking at various studies, CNN reached out to 20 law enforcement agencies in states with trans-inclusive policies. None reported any bathroom assaults after the policies went into effect. One Rhode Island officer said law enforcement tracks sexual offenders closely in the state, and they have not seen any sexual predators assaulting people in public restrooms. A Maine official said narratives like those used by Triller Haver seem to be “based on fear rather than facts.”

Triller Haver says she also believes trans equality will eradicate women’s rights. She has hyperbolically warned that equal rights for the trans community would usher in “the erasure of women.” During an event sponsored by the Family Research Council, she said gender identity was “constructed by liberal activists” and is “synonymous with ‘anything goes.’” On Sarah Palin’s radio network, she called the struggle for trans equality the “actual war on women,” concluding, “When gender identity wins, women lose.”

It’s important to note that many women’s rights groups support trans equality, which pokes holes in Triller Haver’s claims that trans-inclusive policies erode these rights. The National Women’s Law Center notes that anti-trans measures like those pushed by the Montana Family Foundation “are about controlling our bodies, and the decisions we make about them,” which is why “the fight for reproductive justice and bodily autonomy must include and protect trans people.”
With her consistent messaging regarding trans equality being a threat to women’s rights, Triller Haver can sound like a feminist, which wouldn’t play well with her core right-wing audiences. To address this tension, she makes clear that she is not a feminist. In one column, she calls feminists that “entitled group of navel-gazing, man-bashing, bra-burning, Hillary-loving whiners.” She wrote that a feminist “rejects all the things I love most about being female.” She’s opposed causes like equal pay for equal work and organizations like Planned Parenthood. When it comes to bathroom bills, she thinks it is “ironic” that “being ‘progressive’ actually sets women’s lib back about a century.”

Depending on the audience, Triller Haver will claim her opposition to trans-inclusive policies isn’t even about trans people. Despite these platitudes, she frequently makes much more derogatory comments about the trans community and its allies, including claims that gender identity is not a real issue. In a column for the Family Policy Institute of Washington, she wrote that “gender identity politics are offensive on so many levels” and complained that the “widespread indulging of obvious delusion makes idiots of us all.”

Triller Haver has said that showing support for children who don’t conform to traditional gender stereotypes could not be “rooted in anything other than pedophilia” and that “embracing and celebrating delusion hurts everyone.” She imploded her readers to fight tolerance and the “hatefully false sense of ‘love’” that promotes trans equality.

In a Federalist column, she equated the trans community with men who think they’re wolves, men who wear diapers and pretend to be babies, and a group of modern-day vampires who drink human blood. She’s also claimed that schools teaching kids to use gender neutral pronouns are “forcing them [kids] to lie to themselves,” and students are being taught to “deny biological realities.”

All of these depictions align with the Religious Right’s long-standing beliefs that members of the LGBTQ community are deviants and threats to society. Triller Haver also trots out the standard Religious Right talking points about LGBTQ equality seeking “special rights,” which she also claims will come “at the expense of women and girls.” She has claimed that trans equality is “social engineering” that is “basically Marxism.”

In reality, the medical community recognizes gender identity as a very real part of the human experience, and groups like the American Psychological Association are clear that being a trans person is not a mental disorder. The American Medical Association states that gender is “incompletely understood as a binary selection” and supports efforts to allow trans people to access “basic human services and public facilities in line with one’s gender identity.”

Using her stump speech and altering it slightly, Triller Haver has opposed trans-inclusive policies far and wide from her base of operations in Washington State. In 2016, she showed up on the East Coast and worked with the Massachusetts Family Institute against a trans-inclusive policy being considered by the state legislature.

In 2017, she joined efforts by Texas Values on a bathroom bill making its way through the state’s legislative process. She’s spoken to Tea Parties, been quoted extensively by national groups like the American Family Association, and appeared on Sarah Palin’s Radio Network. Even the anti-government John Birch Society featured a profile of Triller Haver in its *The New American*.

**Working with Hate Groups**

In addition to her work mentioned above, Kae-
Kaeley Triller Haver has worked extensively with two national organizations categorized as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

One of those groups is the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a law firm founded by prominent leaders of the Religious Right. ADF is deeply involved in supporting anti-trans bathroom bills around the country, even drafting model legislation called the “Student Physical Privacy Act.” Triller Haver is featured in a video ADF rolled out as part of its campaign in May 2016 and has been featured on the ADF’s Freedom Matters podcast.

Columnist Michelle Goldberg noted the ADF video “attempts to marshal the language of campus-style social justice politics, with its emphasis on victimization, trauma, and triggers.” She also discussed how Religious Right groups have historically questioned statistics related to sexual violence against women, but now groups like ADF are using the same data to oppose trans-inclusive policies.

She wrote that right-wing websites that “usually sneer at the idea of rape culture earnestly invoke it” when it suits their agenda to target the trans community. Goldberg concluded saying there is “bad faith at work” in these cases where right-wing activists engage in a brand of “high-level trolling” with the goal of pushing regressive policy.

The second anti-gay hate group with which Triller Haver has worked extensively is the Family Research Council (FRC), the most influential Religious Right group in the country. Triller Haver spoke at the group’s 2016 “Values Voter Summit,” which is the largest political event for the Religious Right every year. Triller Haver was part of a panel discussing “bathroom directives” and what actions could be taken against the Obama Administration.

Triller Haver’s anti-trans work has been featured in other ways by FRC. In February 2017, she was part of a program with FRC’s Tony Perkins, Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and North Carolina Lt. Governor Dan Forest to discuss what states were doing to promote anti-trans policies. FRC has extensively quoted her and repeated her story in overviews of bathroom battles around the country.

Hands Across the Aisle Coalition: “Biology Isn’t Bigotry”

In addition to her participation with Just Want Privacy, Triller Haver is a founding member of a relatively-new entity, the Hands Across the Aisle Coalition. She describes it as a “bi-partisan coalition of women united around the shared goal of preserving sex based protections for females.”

While the Coalition’s website claims it is composed of “progressive and conservative women”
who have come together “to stand in solidarity against gender identity legislation” which seeks to erase “our own hard-won civil rights,” its lack of any progressive credentials and sponsorship by prominent conservative groups puts the bi-partisan claim in deep question. LGBTQ equality has been central to the progressive agenda in recent decades, yet the Coalition vows to “oppose the transgender agenda.” Hands Across the Aisle echoes Triller Haver’s primary talking point that trans equality means the destruction of women’s rights. The Coalition states “equating sex with gender is harmful to women.”

Many women’s rights advocates disagree. For instance, Terry O’Neill, the president of the National Organization for Women, wrote that trans equality is a women’s rights issue, because women’s rights “include equality for all women, not just a certain type of women” and definitely “not just women who look like me!” Succinctly, she stated, “Equal means equal.” Furthermore, she explained that transphobia is about dehumanizing and de-meaning a certain group of people – trans community members. She said it also reinforces “the same patriarchal ideology that dictates women’s subordination as second-class citizens.”

Hands Across the Aisle had its big coming out party at the Heritage Foundation’s “Biology Isn’t Bigotry” press event in February 2017. The Heritage Foundation is a non-profit think tank, which bills itself as the “most influential conservative group in America,” that is a powerhouse for right-wing ideologies. Hands Across the Aisle had five representatives on the panel of speakers at the event, which was dedicated to responding to the “bathroom battles” around the country. Triller Haver gave her stump speech, including doubling down on her claim that trans-inclusive policies erase women, saying, “When gender identity wins, women always lose.”

Hands Across the Aisle is positioned to take advantage of the right-wing’s “biology isn’t bigotry” public relations campaign. It’s a message that Triller Haver has honed over the last two years, and now she has a coalition to promote it. The Heritage Foundation isn’t the only right-wing group using the tag line. When releasing it video in May 2016, the ADF remarked, “Biology—not feelings—is the only sensible basis for ensuring privacy and safety in these areas.”

Charges of “Doxing” Trans Children

Across social media, parents of trans kids, and people working with such families, claim that Triller Haver engages in “doxing” kids. Doxing is the practice of using the Internet to collect personal and private information and then publicly releasing it, generally with malicious intent. Triller Haver allegedly infiltrates private Facebook groups posing as the parent of a trans child, gathers personal information and photos of group members, and then publishes that information.

In a column posted on Medium, a trans activist detailed how Triller Haver infiltrated a private Facebook group that provides support for parents of trans kids. Triller Haver then tweeted photos of posts from the group, including one in which she stated, “Stop transing kids!!!!” For her part, Triller Haver has admitted to infiltrating Facebook groups for research purposes.

Failed Anti-Trans Campaigns, Questionable Tactics

As mentioned earlier, shortly after being fired by the YMCA, Triller Haver became Communications Director for Just Want Privacy, a group established to repeal the trans-inclusive policy enacted by the Washington Human Rights Commission. The group started as a project of Family Policy Institute of Washington (FPIW), which, like the Montana Family Foundation, is a state affiliate of the Family Research Council. Just Want Privacy has failed to qualify its anti-trans measure for the ballot two times, along with unsuccessful attempts to make the change through the legislative process. Its talking points are basically the same as those used by the Montana Family Foundation.

In June 2016, Joseph Backholm, FPIW’s leader and chair of Just Want Privacy, went well beyond using fear-mongering rhetoric. He advocated that male signature gatherers for their anti-trans initiative stalk women at public restrooms. In a FPIW podcast, he said:
“My favorite signature gathering strategy for all the men out there: go to the mall, go to the store, stand outside the women’s locker room, take it to the gym with you, stand outside the women’s locker room and gather signatures from the women, and if they decline, then follow them into the bathroom and ask them if now would be a better time. And see what kind of a response you would get.”

Just Want Privacy also faced criticism related to a signature gatherer who physically grabbed a woman after she refused to sign a petition. According to the woman, the man was “visibly appalled” when she declined to sign the petition, started mocking her in a “menacing way,” and then grabbed her by the arm. Other signature gatherers were accused of yelling and flicking cigarettes at people who wouldn’t sign the petitions.

In 2017, Just Want Privacy was the focus of complaints that petitions being used by signature gatherers were not in compliance with Washington law, as they did not feature language identical to that of the ballot initiative. Just Want Privacy also came under fire for not reporting the staff time and campaign resources contributed by FPIW and the ADF.

During Just Want Privacy’s ballot effort in 2017, the group exploited an assault victim to try and further its cause, which backfired in a very public way. A Seattle runner was assaulted in a public women’s restroom by a male sex offender in early March 2017.

The woman was able to fight off the attacker and lock him in the restroom until police arrived. Just Want Privacy quickly used the story and a picture of the runner’s bloody face in an e-mail blast to solicit donations and support for its efforts. Just Want Privacy also posted on Facebook about the attack, linking it to trans-inclusive policies.

The woman quickly denounced Just Want Privacy’s use of her story, saying she wouldn’t “allow anyone to use me and my horrific sexual assault to cause harm and discrimination to others.” She said she opposed Just Want Privacy’s ballot measure, and that it wouldn’t have prevented her from being attacked.

She called on Just Want Privacy to issue a retraction of their statements and refund any money raised using her story. As media reports noted, there was no evidence to suggest the attacker was, or even claimed to be, trans.

After failing for the second straight year to get its anti-trans measure on the ballot, Just Want Privacy said it would keep fighting. “We will not stop working to reverse this dangerous rule,” stated Triller Haver for the group. “Whether that means trying again next year or working with the legislature in the upcoming session will be determined in the near future.”

Conclusion

Featuring Kaeley Triller Haver at events kicking off its ballot initiative campaign exemplifies the Montana Family Foundation’s anti-trans bigotry. In propping her up, the organization is linking itself, and its campaign, to a national activist with a his-
tory of questionable practices and inflammatory rhetoric.

While Triller Haver claims to represent women, her positions are rooted in the strictly-defined gender roles perpetuated by the Religious Right’s framework of sexism and patriarchy. By rejecting trans people and the concept of gender identity, she helps build power for that framework. Counter to her claim, it is really women who disproportionately suffer from the strict definitions imposed by the Religious Right’s patriarchal sexism.

Activist Suzanne Pharr writes that the weapons of sexism are economics, violence, and homophobia, which are designed to keep women in their place by threatening violence and pain. Members of the LGBTQ community and others who break these narrowly-defined gender roles pose a threat to the Religious Right’s framework and worldview.

When the Montana Family Foundation and Triller Haver raise the issue of violence against women, they are pointing to a real-life problem. However, instead of trying to work toward real solutions, they use the threat of violence to keep women in narrowly-defined roles and control them. Women are told to always be on alert for men who may sexually assault them, while at the same time being told it is up to men to protect them. While discussing her exit from the YMCA, Triller Haver alluded to this dynamic, saying she “appealed to the good Christian men around me to defend my cause” and was surprised when they didn’t come to her rescue.

Anyone not easily fitting into the Religious Right’s narrative is considered dangerous. The reduction of sexual identity to sexual activity has pigeonholed women like Triller Haver into adopting these narrow definitions and actually hurting the advancement of women’s rights and equity instead of defending it.

Triller Haver brought to Montana her false dichotomy claiming it is impossible to support trans-inclusive policies and women’s rights at the same time. While the Montana Family Foundation will no doubt promote this viewpoint, it is important to remember that the Family Foundation and its allies have no interest in supporting real-world services for victims of sexual violence. Instead, they will exploit this issue for short-term political gain and try to sell it to Montana voters.

Montana communities must not be fooled into thinking that the Family Foundation’s initiative is anything other than standard discrimination against LGBTQ people.

The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence has denounced the type of anti-trans statements used by the Montana Family Foundation and Kaeley Triller Haver, calling them the “bathroom predator myth.”

“Over 200 municipalities and 18 states have non-discrimination laws protecting transgender people’s access to facilities consistent with the gender they live every day,” states the Task Force. “None of those jurisdictions have seen a rise in sexual violence or other public safety issues due to non-discrimination laws. Assaulting another person in a restroom or changing room remains against the law in every single state.”
Endnotes

2) The Montana Family Foundation’s Ballot Initiative is I-183, “The Montana Locker Room Privacy Act.” The Foundation’s 2017 legislation was House Bill 609, which failed to make it out of committee.
10) Ibid.
13) Ibid.
23) Ibid.
32) Ibid.
33) Ibid.
37) American Psychological Association, Website, “Transgender People, Gender Identity and Gender Expression.”
45) Family Research Action, 2016 Values Voter Summit, Schedule


50) Ibid.


55) *Medium*, “I’m a Trans Woman and I Don’t Know How to Do This,” Sept. 27, 2017.


63) Ibid.

64) *The Stranger*, “For the Second Year in a Row, Anti-Trans Activists Fail to Turn in Signatures for Their Ballot Measure,” July 7, 2017.
