



Inclusion: The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcome, respected, supported, and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. We are allies, showing up TOGETHER in a positive and educational manner.

An upcoming event at ZooMontana has elicited a tremendous amount of criticism and repulsive personal attacks. The event, "Drag Queen Story Hour," is hosted by 406 Pride, and intends to provide a space where, "kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions and imagine a world where people can present as they wish, where dress up is real." Unfortunately, a few members of the public and elected officials have conflated dressing differently with sexual perversion.

The Billings Chamber firmly stands behind 406 Pride's and ZooMontana's right to hold and host the event. Those that do not, need not attend. We believe in Free Enterprise and are very concerned at the requests to city and county government to wield unauthorized powers to cancel the event. We condemn, to the strongest degree possible, those who have made personal attacks and baseless accusations against ZooMontana staff. We are proud to stand side-by-side with ZooMontana staff and board for standing up for all people. If you would like to stand alongside as an ally, consider becoming a ZooMontana member.

The Billings Chamber believes our community and its businesses will grow and succeed if we become be more inclusive and show all people they belong in Billings.

- We believe that every individual has a right to live and work in an environment free of inequality, injustice, intolerance, prejudice, or systemic restrictions of their constitutional rights.
- We reject ALL forms of prejudice, discrimination, and systemic restrictions based on age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, family status, veteran status, or any other corporate or individual restriction prohibited by law.
- We firmly believe that diversity and inclusion are not just the right of every individual, but actively championing these paradigms will result in a more prosperous, innovative, and thriving business environment where talent stays and great leaders are regularly produced. Each person shall be judged solely on the content of their character and abilities.
- We believe we have a responsibility as a business and community leader to lead by example to create the diverse and inclusive community that will truly result in every persons' unfettered ability to achieve the American Dream in peace.

Lastly, we call on our local elected leadership to recognize a private organization's right to host events as they see fit and condemn the hatred and baseless accusations against our wonderful community partners.

We've come a long way since "Not in Our Town." But it is clear we have a long road ahead of us.

Click [HERE](#) to learn about and donate to 406 Pride; Click [HERE](#) to donate to ZooMontana; Visit www.BillingsDEI.com to utilize the Chamber's Business DEI Toolkit; Click [HERE](#) to download the Chamber's and Visit Billings' ["Please Be Kind" toolkit](#);