



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Missoula County Democrats Protest the Silencing of Rep. Zooey Zephyr

[Missoula] Republican leadership today refused to allow Rep. Zooey Zephyr (D-Missoula) the right to speak on the House floor on SB458, a bill that misdefines “sex” in Montana Code, the discriminatory implications of which mean Montana risks losing \$7 billion in funding for critical state agencies, from Montana universities to prisons. House leadership then continued to refuse to allow Rep. Zephyr to speak on any bill.

This action follows the right-wing Freedom Caucus’s unwarranted call for censure, in response to Rep. Zephyr comments describing the impact of another bill, SB99, on the transgender community.

With these actions, they are silencing not only the voice of Representative Zephyr, but also the voices of roughly 11,000 Montanans in HD100. Rep. Zephyr’s work this session on behalf of renters, in service of criminal justice reform and to protect the human rights of all Montanans has been invaluable, and the Missoula County Democrats are proud to have her representing us.

We call for an apology to Rep. Zephyr for Freedom Caucus’s letter, which misgenders Rep. Zephyr and demands censure for words that were both accurate and appropriate. We call for Rep. Zephyr to be allowed to speak on her constituents’ behalf. And we call for civility and respect in the Montana legislature. Government is here to represent our interests, not to silence our voices. And Montana is a place that is big enough for us all.

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