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SB53-16/17: Resolution Regarding Renter-Averse Legislation in the 2017 Montana Legislative Session

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana

Resolution Regarding Renter-Averse Legislation in the 2017 Montana Legislative Session

February 8, 2017

SB53-16/17

Authored by: Bailey Durnell, ASUM Senator; Mary O’Malley, ASUM Off-Campus Renter Center Director;
Sponsored by: Sam Forstag, ASUM President

Whereas, the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) represents the interests of over 12,000 students at the University of Montana;

Whereas, the Montana Residential Landlord Tenant Act (MRLTA) was designed to fairly protect and represent both landlords and tenants;

Whereas, UM students are both landlords and tenants;

Whereas, Current Legislative proposals such as Senate Bills 174, 175, and 176 and House Bill 348 would significantly curtail tenants’ rights to privacy, safety, and equal treatment under the law;

Whereas, Senate Bill 176 presents a gross overreach on the part of landlord advocates and a legislature in dictating rulings to the judicial branch;

Whereas, the protections currently laid out in the MRLTA are particularly important to college students and other vulnerable tenant populations;

Whereas, preserving the equity and fairness of the MRLTA is important to all students who live off-campus;

Whereas, the ASUM Off-Campus Renter Center (OCRC) is an ASUM agency that works to advocate for the rights of student tenants who rent off-campus;

Whereas, Mary O’Malley, Director of the OCRC, has identified current legislation that threatens the balanced relationship of landlords and tenants dictated by the MRLTA;

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved, that the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) supports landlord-tenant laws that ensure equal protection for tenants;

Therefore, Let it Further Be Resolved, that ASUM condemns any legislative efforts to weaken legal protections and basic rights for vulnerable tenant populations in Montana;

Therefore, Let it Further Be Resolved, that the ASUM lobbyist is authorized to advocate for the preservation of legal protections of student tenants;
Therefore, Let it Further Be Resolved, that ASUM encourages student organizations across the state, such as ASMSU and MAS, to take a formal stance against any legislative efforts to undermine the rights of student renters and otherwise vulnerable tenant populations;

Therefore, Let it Further Be Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be sent to Senator Keith Regier, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee; Senator Diane Sands, Vice Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee; Senator Jennifer Fielder, Vice Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee; Representative Alan Doane, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee; Representative Virginia Court, Vice Chair of the House Judiciary Committee; Representative Seth Berglee, Vice Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee;

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Elizabeth Engebretson
Chair of the Senate