Letter To The Editor: Malicious harms ordinance makes most vulnerable feel safer



This letter to the editor was posted in the Gillette News Record on November 18th, 2025. You can read the original letter online **HERE**.

We are coming up on the second reading of the repeal of the Malicious Harms Ordinance Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025 at 6 p.m. in City Chambers. Please come and share your reasons and/or experiences for why this ordinance makes you feel safer in our community.

Some of the arguments we have heard against keeping this hard-fought-for ordinance do not hold water. This ordinance does not create a separate class of people. If you are targeted by a crime specifically because of who you are, it does not

matter WHO you are. It is still a Malicious Harms crime! We all deserve to be treated with respect and civility, no matter who you are or how you live. The argument that we don’t need this ordinance since it has not been invoked in the last two years, actually proves that it has done its job acting as a deterrent.

People who have spoken against this ordinance have no idea what it is like to be reviled or unwelcome just because of who you are. You cannot change that, so you go about life knowing that people devalue you because of who you are. It would be good if we could all walk a mile in the shoes of a person who is unwelcome or shunned. There is a reason that being shunned by society is a horrible fate.

Some people say that members of the gay community choose to be gay, but that just is not true. They are born that way, and many agonize about how to live their lives true to their authentic selves, rather than how people think they should exist. I implore our Gillette City Councilmembers to keep this ordinance in place, and remember that they represent ALL of us. If the ordinance makes the most vulnerable in our community feel safer, isn’t that alone worth it?

Christy Gerrits

Gillette