

Montana State Legislature

Exhibit Number: 3

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March 16, 2005

Honorable Governor Brian Schweitzer and Montana Legislature
State of Montana
Helena, MT 59201

Dear Governor Schweitzer and Members of the Legislature:

Please support the \$7,500,000 budget to implement Indian Education for All Montanans, above the \$2.0 million that you have included in your budget for the 2007 Biennium for OPI. This money is needed to insure adequate resources to develop curriculum that is aligned with Montana's standards, create a clearinghouse for materials, do a website and pilot test materials. In addition, it is needed for professional development models of "best practices" as well as grants to "ready to go" schools.

It is time for Montana to fulfill its constitutional promise made 33 years ago.

Name	Address	Email
Ronda Howlett	P.O. Box 153 Arlee Mt	
Sim N. Howlett	728 W. Sussex Missoula, MT	misconceived@hotmail.com
Colleen Major	422 Roosevelt St Missoula, MT	colleen.major@umt.edu
Al Cardley	P.O. Box 4984 Missoula, MT	su@9
Mary Groom-Hall	650 Lost Mine Loop Missoula MT	mary.groom@umt.edu
Marshall DeLano	125 Bank St, Missoula, MT	mdelano@delano.com
Jean Curtiss	1419 Howell St Missoula MT	59802
Shi R. Ch	1609 58th W, Missoula MT	59801
Michelle Davis	2314 W Central Missoula MT	59801
Aya Mishra	1800 Phillips #1 Missoula, MT	59802
Anna C. Galt	439 Cornell Ave, Missoula, MT	59801
Emily B. Simpson	5409 Mainview Missoula, MT	59803

see back

JuAnne Moon

105 High Park Way
Missoula MT 59803

jmoon@word.

Susan Barmeyer

4501 Timberlane St.
Missoula, MT 59802

jonsuz@in-tch.cc

HAL SCHMID

3573 Jocko Rd.
Arlee, MT 59821

hschmid@
Montana.Ce

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Email</u>
Janet Robideaux	208 E. Main Msla	jrobideaux@mtaction.org
Carole Meyers	PO Box 3011 msla, mt	cmeyers2919@hotmail.com
Nancy Larum	5108 Village View Way #5 Msla	
Amie Thuber	1221 KEMPER ST MISSOULA MT 59801 Missoula 59801	athuber@ynwcaofmissoula.org
DeAnna Morrison	1108 Coloma Dr Missoula 59801	
Diane Johnson	2007 Burlington	
Mark Morrison	1108 Coloma Dr. Msla MT 59801	Stinkweed212@msn.com
Amanda Burton	100 So. Garfield St Msla MT 59801	Baby-Girl24419@yahoo.com
Sharon Beauchamp	4415 Rainbow, MSLA, MT 59803	
Kelley M Landress	618 S. 5 th West APT A Missoula MT 59815	Kellymelandress@tbrnail.com
TRI PHAM	4041 FIELDSTONE CROSSING MSLA, MT 59802	tritripham@yahoo.com

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Name	Address	Email
Jane Elser	1701 M. Beaula Ave.	elsert@aol
Jane Elser	4222 Larkspur Dr.	ggweix@ms.
Diane Olivier	1637 Sherman St. - Missoula	grolive K12
Orrin Johnson	3205 6th W Missoula, MT	awj5454@ya
Gisele Forrest	1900 53rd W #20 MSLU MT	gisele123
Zane Rosette	1860 W. Sussex Apt. D MSLU MT	z-rosette
AMY SINGS IN THE TIMBER	2107 PALMER CT MSLU, MT 59801	ASINGS@46
Carolyn Trendway	1815 11th Ave W. Col. Falls, MT.	591
Andrea Phillip	721 Montana Ave. E. Missoula,	
Frances Vandenberg	2157 S. Couture Loop Arlee MT	59821
Dalon Jones	Box 392 St. Ignatius, MT	59865 tou

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And support \$250,000 for the Montana University System for
It is time for Montana to fulfill its constitutional promise made 33 years ago. a parallel effort

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Email</u>
Ellen Swaney	6 Chauce St.	eswaney@oche.montana.edu
Ray Cross	5435 Skyway Dr. Missoula	ray6selway@umt.edu MT 59804
Thomas J Schilke	1520 Sunflower	Missoula MT 59802
Karen J Schilke	1520 Sunflower	Missoula MT 59802
Charles Couture	404 S. 6th W.	MISSOULA, MT 59801
K. J. Cross	5435 Skyway Dr. Msla	MT 59804
Supanne Reed	836 Edith Msla	59801 reed55@yahoo.com
Pom Fountain	815 MONROE ST	MISSOULA 59802 pomcf@a15.net
Doug Garner	1840 Mullen Trail	Missoula 59808
Valerie Forest	1900 5th St W	Msla 59801
Cindy Weese	601 Woodford,	Missoula 59801 cindyweese@yahoo.com

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Email</u>
Caitlin Harcrow	1840 Mullan Trail 59808	caitgar@yahoo.com
Staci Hemmer	131 S. Higgins #602 59802	staciilynn@yahoo.com
Robert Bruce Adams	900 Los Mine Loop Missoula MT 59803	
Brie Howell	117-B Grandview Way Missoula, MT 59803	
Satisha Old Bull	1652 N. Russell Apt. H Missoula, MT 59808	powowgrrl@yahoo.com
Conception Flores	1920 A Hura Dr. Missoula MT 59802	flores3c@yahoo.com
Angela Zuka	P.O. Box 18061 Missoula, MT 59808	
Phyllis Ngai	3400 W. Central MSL 59801	
Kendi G. Howard	2236 E. Vista MS1 59803	

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Email</u>
<i>Shanley Kwo</i>	218 Artemos, Missoula 59803	shanleykw@msd.umt.edu
<i>Joyce</i>	P.O. Box 149, Dixon 59831	joyces@cskt.org
<i>Aanine</i>	1027 8th Ave Helena	aaninin@yahoo.com
<i>Terri Cizone</i>	2475 McClure Rd. Arklev, MT 59821	
<i>Denise Juneau</i>	1007 8th Avenue Helena MT 59601	
<i>David H. Wesse</i>	218 Artemos, Missoula 59803	david.wesse@umontana.edu
<i>Margaret Schmidt</i>	214 Pattee Canyon Dr. Missoula 59803	margaret.schmidt@umontana.edu
<i>Catalyn Lott</i>	215 S 5th St. E. Missoula, MT 59801	@crlwyn.lott@msd.umt.edu
<i>David G. Seaman</i>	2417 42nd St. Missoula MT 59807	missoula@education@yaho.com
<i>Jandra Y. LANNON</i>	2035 S 11th St W. Missoula MT 59801	543-7866

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Email</u>
Heather Preble	214 N 14 th Ave Forsyth, MT 59327	linnea285@hotmail
Anna Prinski	938 Cooper St Missoula, MT 59802	aprinski@hotmail.com
Shianne Kicking Woman	610 Garfield Missoula MT 59801	L.Kickingwoman@yahoo
Diana Vanek	514 W. Central Ave Missoula MT 59801	vanekdiana@hotmail.com
Judy Preston	601 Woodford St. Missoula	judy@ronan.net
Todd Moe	618 S. 5 th W St Missoula	toddmoe@hotmail.com
Gyda Swaney	1875 E. Broadway	gyda.swaney@umontana.edu

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Subject: indian education for all montanans

Chairperson Rep. Rosie Buzzas, House Appropriations
 Capitol Building
 Helena, MT 59620

Dear Representative Buzzas,

I am writing to request that the House Appropriations Committee provide funding for Indian Education for All Montanans. This constitutional promise to all Montanans - that the State is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of Indian heritage - is 33 years old. Although the \$2 million currently provided in the Governor's request is much appreciated, and is indeed an increase over the amount earmarked for this provision in previous years, it remains an inadequate amount of necessary funding should be based upon this provision's 33 year history and omission and the fact that the State is "defenseless" in its lack of compliance with the Indian Education provision in Montana's Constitution.

I believe there is a current legislative request that a minimal amount of \$8 million in addition to the Governor's current request, be provided to Indian Education for All Montanans. Although I believe that \$10 million remains an insufficient

does constitute a bigger step toward fulfilling Montana's constitutional c and obligation to Indian Education for All Montanans. \$10 million allows th community to begin, in earnest, their work on well thought out plans.

You may not realize how monumental it would be if the work of Indiar continued *with* the State's adequate support. There are a great number of heroic people who have worked, for generations, on implementing Indiar for All Montanans. Their work has resulted in small, incremental succes State took bold steps, however, and provided adequate professional deve teachers, made accurate resources available to classrooms, and offered all : opportunity to learn - truly learn - about Montana's tribal nations, the suc be overwhelming. This type of success can only help Montana and w incredible tribute to those who have dedicated their lives to breathir Montana's constitutional promise.

I do not come by my opinion without awareness of the issues surro implementation of Indian Education for All Montanans. I went through public education system from elementary to graduate school, with very min education about Indians, other than those classes I sought out. I worke teacher's assistant and a teacher in Montana's public school system where but with very little monetary or administrative support, attempted to inc issues in my classroom curriculum. I was the Indian Education Specialist fo of Public Instruction where I worked, with minimal financial support, Montana public school on implementing Indian Education for All Mo understand that Indian education is certainly a part of a quality education that the education community stands ready to assist you in making this co promise a reality.

There has been a lot of talk lately about "handshakes being worth some "opening of doors," and "new days." It is now time to stop ignoring and this constitutional obligation and put the money behind words and pror million in support of Indian Education for All Montanans would definitely be

Fulfilling the promise is not overwhelming because its goal and purpose is honorable. The provision simply promises that ALL Montana citizens will t the opportunity to learn about Indian people and Montana tribes. It does that only Indians learn about Indians - it means that ALL Montanans l Indians. It really is that simple, and it is what Montanans deserve.

I do not envy your work with the State budget. I do, however, thank y current support and hope you work to increase the State's financial c to Indian Education for All Montanans to \$10 million. It is time.

Sincerely,

Denise Juneau

8th Avenue

Helena, Montana 59601

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