



**Bozeman Public Schools**  
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Dear House Education Committee Members:

I am writing to support House Bill 404. Bozeman School District has a rich tradition of using volunteers in our schools and Representative Koopman's bill will allow us to enhance that even more while providing a mechanism for current teachers to benefit.

Our community has a high percentage of highly educated people that have a great deal to offer in the development of our students. Offering them a tax deduction for volunteering will likely increase our ability to use volunteers to enrich the student's educational experience. We do not foresee that this bill will displace any of our teachers, but may allow us to develop and maintain programs that our students otherwise would not have access to. One such program that we have used volunteers for in the past is K-5 foreign language. The program was offered to our students in the late 1990's but was eliminated because it became very difficult to recruit volunteers. The benefits of that program are being seen today in our high school as witnessed by the high number of students taking advanced placement foreign language classes. An incentive like the one proposed in this bill would have helped greatly in the recruitment of volunteers and possibly kept the program alive.

Under the bill, the savings generated from the volunteers will be used to enhance teacher salaries. We are in the process of studying an alternative salary schedule for our teachers and this bill may provide a source of funding for any adopted plan. As you are aware offering a competitive salary to teachers is a challenge that every district in Montana faces. Even though I do not envision this as the ultimate solution to that challenge, every little bit helps.

I hope that the discussion on this bill centers on enhancing the opportunities for students and not its effect on adults. Thank you for your dedication to the State of Montana and its students.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Johnson  
Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations