Montana State Legislature

Exhibit Number: 4

This exhibit is several letters and documents regarding HB 435, which contains several pages of Montanans' names and addresses. The number of letters and documents exceeds the maximum number of pages for scanning. Ten pages have been scanned for your research. The original exhibit is on file at the Montana Historical Society and may be viewed there.

Montana Historical Society Archives, 225 N. Roberts, Helena, MT 59620-1201; phone (406) 444-4774. For minutes in paper format, please contact the Montana State Law Library, Justice Building, 215 N. Sanders, Helena, MT 59620; (406) 444-3660. Tapes and exhibits are also available at the Historical Society (tapes are retained for five years). Scanning done by: Susie Hamilton

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 1-31-05
HB 435

ASUM
Associated Students
The University of Montana

January 31, 2005

Dear Senator Galvin-Halcro and members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to you today in strong support of HB 435, the Governor's Best and Brightest Scholarship bill. This bill will help the students of The University of Montana and the rest of the Montana University System tremendously. As I'm sure you know, the price of a college education has skyrocketed for the last several years. At UM-Missoula, students suffered under tuition increases averaging 9% ***per year*** of the FY04-05 biennium. At some MSU campuses, those increases were over 12%.

A higher education, whether two-year or four-year, has become increasingly necessary to succeed in today's competitive job market. Ironically, as higher education has become more important, it has also less affordable, especially for the low-income students who need it to improve their lot in life. This bill addresses that issue by providing need-based aid for low-income students.

Many people have complained about Montana's great "brain drain." One of the longest running jokes in our state asks what Montana's biggest export is. The punch line: our youth. In particular, Montana often loses our most talented youth, those who can either afford or earn scholarships to out of state institutions. This bill addresses that issue by providing merit-based aid for low-income students.

HB 435 is the single most important bill for students this year. It will provide hundreds of new scholarships for Montana's youth, making higher education truly accessible for all and providing an incentive for our most talented students to remain in the state. As members of the House Education Committee, you can rest assured that these scholarships really will have an impact on Montana's students.

Included in this packet, you will find testimony from many students, both from The University of Montana at Missoula and the Montana State University-Great Falls College of Technology. Unfortunately, these students (myself included) could not attend today's hearing because they are in classes. You can tell how much they care, however, because of their comments, and their clear support of this bill.

Thank you for your time and interest,

Gale L. Price
ASUM President

My name is Krissy Normandy and my hometown is Havre. I was accepted into the dental hygiene program at MSUGF-COT in the fall of 2003. Over the last two years I have raised my two children on my own and attended this challenging program. I am very fortunate to have been chosen to have this quality education, but the expense is over the top. Every week the program requires more money out of our pockets for equipment required to perform our duties as dental hygienist. I feel that the day is going to come when there will be no applicants into this program because of the consent nickels and dimes required. I know in my situation it is very hard to come up with money at the spare of the moment, for my children and myself live on a budget just to buy groceries. This is one very reasonable situation way school is hard for me. Always wondering how much money is going to be taken out of my pocket this week before I graduate is a constant worry.

Why I support Governor Schweitzer's best and brightest postsecondary scholarship program:

I am not a student who needs a program such as the best and brightest scholarship program, for I fortunately have parents who make enough to send their youngest and only college age son to the University of Montana. Though I was lucky enough to have help from my family, many of the people I graduated high school with from Stevensville were not so lucky and would have greatly benefited from such a program. Many friends of mine have to work part time hours or greater in order to afford school, while their families have to sacrifice in order to help their sons or daughters. Finishing school for many of my friends helps little financially due to the hefty loan payments they must pay off after graduation. It is these loan payments that force many Montana high school and college graduates to leave the state so as to make enough income to pay off the loans.

These factors combine to create a financial trap for Montana graduates and a continuous extraction of Montana's best and brightest from their home. This continuous drain of Montana's educated youth keeps the state from realizing its economic potential, and robs many towns and cities of a vital population. Montana needs a program that ensures that every high school graduate that is capable gets a college degree regardless of their family's financial status.

Benjamin Courteau,
Stevensville High School Graduate, and
University of Montana Senior in History

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
I hope you will give House 435 a do pass recommendation.
Thank you,

Signature [signature]
Name: Kimberly D. Pappas
Address: 421 W Alder - Main

Comments: please pass House Bill 435 because it's really important that we keep our children in-state and discourage our best + brightest from leaving. The best way to help society is by educating the children!!

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
I hope you will give House 435 a do pass recommendation.
Thank you,
Signature [signature]
Name: Julie C Marshall
Address: 345 1/2 W. Central - Miss

Comments: Montana Children desirve all of the help that we can possible give them. What a great incentive to continue their education.

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature Britta Padgham
Name: Britta Padgham
Address: 508 North St. E.

Comments: I am a senior undergraduate student at the University of Montana. With increasing ~~the~~ tuition costs the University System would greatly benefit and is in need of a Scholarship Program. I was born and raised in Montana, and would like to see this bill passed in order to progress education and access to higher education in my home state.

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature
Name: Ross Prosperi
Address: 116 Lambros Dr.
Msla, Mt 59802
Comments: I am a senior undergraduate student at the University of Montana as well and value my education very much. I would like to see many others follow my lead and surely that is becoming more difficult w/ rising tuition. This bill is critical to advantaging up incoming students access to higher education.

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature
Name: BRYCE BENNETT
Address: 1250 Aabear Ln #3 Missoula, MT 59802

Comments: This program will allow young Montanans accross the state to attain the education that is the building block of Montana. Let's continue our pledge to education, and make sure that the best and brightest of Montana can continue to make us proud they are ours. Thank You!

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature
Name: Matthew Singer
Address: 424 Harmon St., Missoula, MT 59802

Comments: Montana's best and brightest are too often forced into economic exiles. Scholarships and tax credits can keep Montanans in the state and provide a foundation for stronger economic growth.

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature [illegible]
Name: [illegible]
Address: [illegible] Box 5543
Missoula, MT 59806
Comments: College is a wonderful opportunity for myself and I have enjoyed my experience. But with the rising costs of tuition, it is making it more and more difficult. With more scholarships, it would make this easier.

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature Connie LeVasseur
Name: Connie LeVasseur
Address: 4800 Maritsa Ct. #3
Missoula, MT 59803
Comments:
More scholarships would be beneficial!

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature: Tracy Jensen
Name: Tracy Jensen
Address: 3100 S Higgins B33
Missoula MT 59801
Comments: My scholarship in 3yrs has gone up $6,000. It is ridiculous to go to college

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature: Kylie Pancich
Name: Kylie Pancich
Address: 1725 Park Place Apt. C
Missoula Mt 59802
Comments: With raising costs of tuition, it is often hard for people to afford school or in many cases it is virtually impossible to work 2 jobs & go to school.

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature [illegible]
Name: SHAWN HEWEKE
Address: [illegible] 282 EVANS AVE. MISSOULA MT 59801

Comments:

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature [illegible]
Name: Grant Stoffregen
Address: 1456 Lower Lincoln Hills #A 59802-3338

Comments:

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature Scott Simonsen
Name: Scott Simonsen
Address: 201 Kuenle S street
Missoula, MT, 59801
Comments:

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I support House Bill 435, "Montana's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program.
Signature Bri Bach
Name: Brian Bachmeier
Address: 470 Jocko Rd,
Arlee, MT 59821
Comments: