

Montana Coalition of Home Educators

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<http://www.mtche.org>

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462-8900

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Billings
245-2900

Mark Roodel
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756-0801

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Bozeman
587-6163

Advisory Committee

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Broadhead Home Educators
Yellowstone County Home Educators
Ravalli County Parent Educators
Doubtless Home Educators
Bainbridge Area Home Educators
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Columbia Homeschool Group
East Slope Academic Association
Flathead Valley Homeschoolers Association
Gallatin Valley Homeschoolers
Madison Valley Christian Homeschoolers
Lewistown Homeschoolers
Chandlers Area Home Educators
Silver Star Christian Home Educators
Hi Line Homeschoolers
Independent Homeschoolers Network
Laramie Area Homeschoolers
Lincoln County Christian Home Educators
Mangler County Homeschoolers
Mission Valley Homeschoolers
Missoula Homeschoolers Association
Granite County Homeschoolers
Glasgow County Home Educators
Park County Homeschoolers Association
Sagehen-Swan Homeschoolers
Shelby Home Educators
Winniford Area Homeschoolers

To: Members of the House Education Committee
From: Steve White, Legislative Liaison - MCHE

RE: HB435 - An Act to Establish the Governor's Best and Brightest Scholarship Program

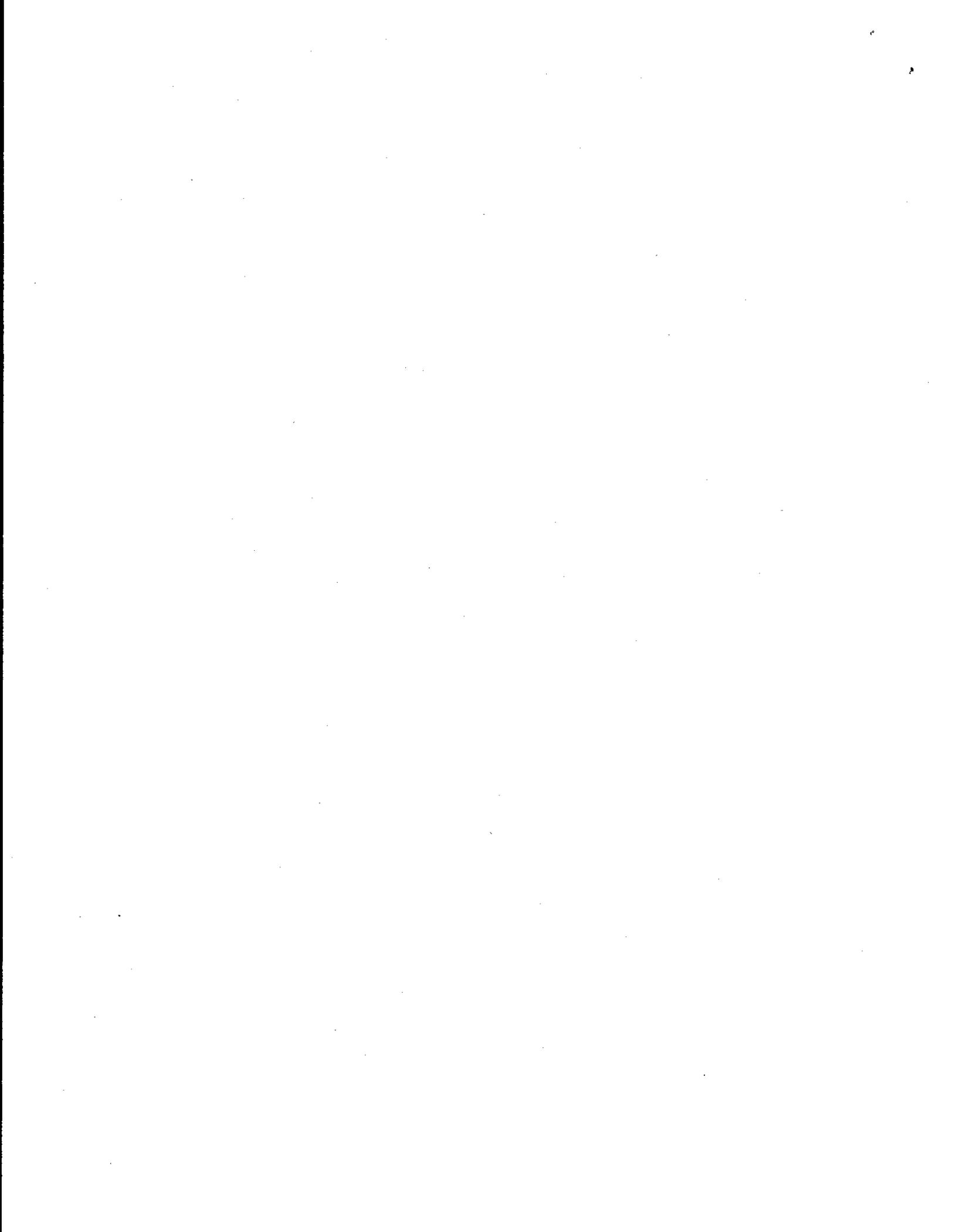
The Montana Coalition of Home Educators, an statewide organization of home education families opposes the current version of HB435, and requests that SB435 be amended to address the current exclusion of non-public school graduates.

The current version of HB435 defines in NEW SECTION 3(1):

"At-large student" means a graduate of any Montana public high school who is awarded a merit scholarship based on high academic achievement as determined by the board in consultation with the council.

This definition would purposely exclude any high school graduate from either a home school or private school from being considered for a scholarship. MCHE suggests the following amendment to that section:

"At-large student" means a graduate of any Montana public high school graduate or GED student of any Montana public, private or homeschool who is awarded a merit scholarship based on high academic achievement as determined by the board in consultation with the council.



In addition, the current version of HB435 includes Eligibility requirements in **NEW SECTION 7(1)(a)**:

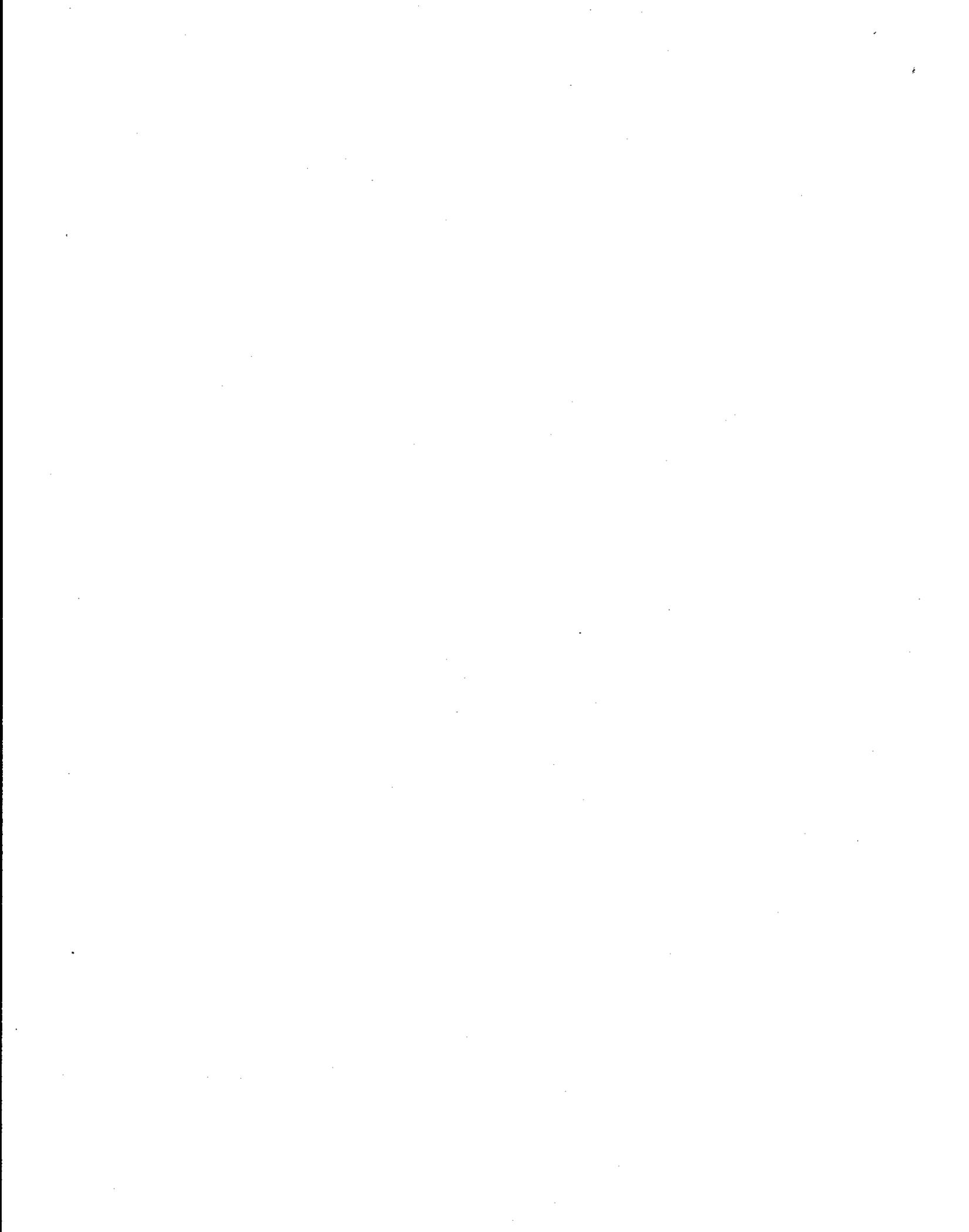
for purposes of a merit-based scholarship, must meet the admission requirements established by board policy, must have earned a high school diploma with a minimum of a 2.5 cumulative grade point average computed on a 4.0 scale, must be admitted, enrolled, or classified as an undergraduate student in a certificate program or an associate or baccalaureate degree program at a postsecondary institution, and must have completed the free application for federal student aid, which may not result in expected family contributions exceeding the cost of attendance

This section also implies that the scholarship opportunities are designed for public school graduates. And also, in comparing the grade point average as referred in HB435 to other scholarships available, a 2.5 requirement seems to low. Typically the GPA is above a 3.00. MCHE suggests the following amendments to this section:

for purposes of a merit-based scholarship, must meet the admission requirements established by board policy, ~~must have earned a high school diploma with a minimum of a 2.5 cumulative grade point average computed on a 4.0 scale,~~ **must be a graduating senior or a graduating GED student for the current year, must be have a 3.50 or higher GPA in a college preparatory curriculum or have a cumulative score of 1380 on the SAT or 30 on the ACT,** must be admitted, enrolled, or classified as an undergraduate student in a certificate program or an associate or baccalaureate degree program at a postsecondary institution, and must have completed the free application for federal student aid, which may not result in expected family contributions exceeding the cost of attendance

Both the Montana and US Constitutions guarantee all citizens Equal Protection. It would be a violation of the principles of those documents to create statutes that would allow government to provide differing opportunities to students based upon educational venue.

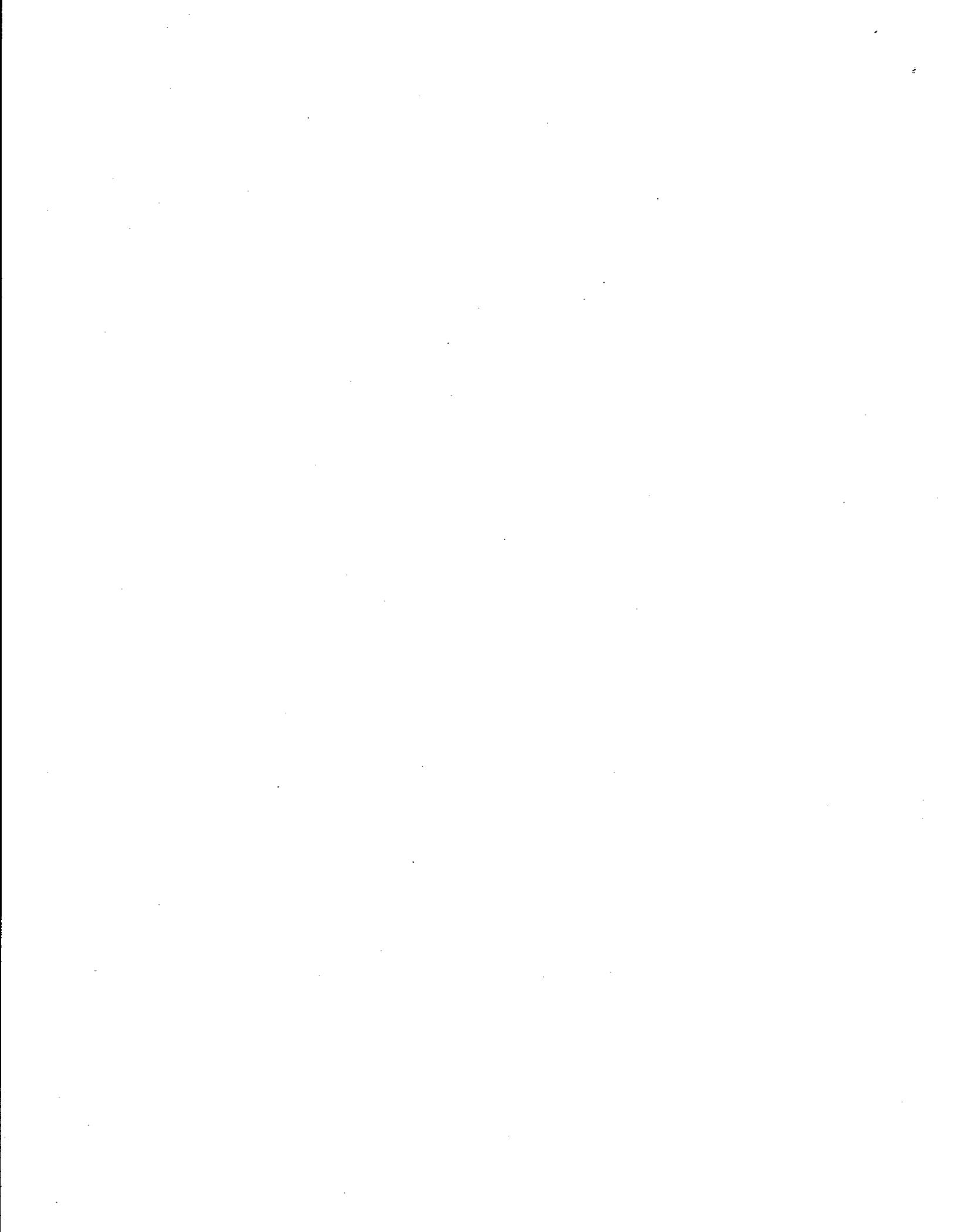
In addition to the above modifications to HB435, we would like to suggest that the Education Committee revisit subsection (b) that also allows a student to obtain a scholarship based upon financial need. This bill should be strictly based upon merit. This Act is designed to reward students who have achieved success academically. It is unfair to allow those students to lose opportunity to others simply based upon financial need. There are many other avenues for those in financial need to pursue for scholarships and assistance.



I have also provided information for the committee that describes other scholarships available to Montana students. The Byrd Scholarship in particular is a popular scholarship available to both public and non-public school students who have demonstrated continued academic achievement.

As a footnote, my home educated son Matthew was awarded the Byrd Scholarship, as well as the MSU Presidential Scholarship. He maintained a high GPA and graduated in 2004 with highest honors in Business (3.95).

Thank you for allowing this information included into this hearing. MCHE respectfully requests for the committee to consider and employ the above amendments.





OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

DATE: January 2005

TO: Steve White
Montana Coalition of Home Educators

FROM: Carol Gneckow, Program Specialist *Carol*

SUBJECT: Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program
Home Schools' Participation

The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program is a merit-based college scholarship that awards \$1,500 annually to approximately 23 outstanding Montana seniors and graduates of GED programs. Each scholarship may be renewed three times during undergraduate study, if the students maintain eligibility. The purpose of the scholarship is "to promote student excellence and achievement and to recognize exceptionally able students who show promise of continued excellence." Scholarships will be equitably distributed across geographic regions of the state.

Some home school students may be interested in the Byrd Scholarship program. If possible, please share this information with home schools in your area.

An applicant must meet the following **minimum qualifications**:

- Be a graduating senior or a graduating GED student for the 2004-05 school year;
- Have a **3.60** or higher GPA in a college preparatory curriculum and have a cumulative score of **1380** on the SAT, or **30** on the ACT;
- Use the scholarship award for the first year of study, renewable for up to **three additional years**, as a full-time student at any public or private institution of higher education, as defined by 34 CFR-668.2. Proprietary institutions are not included and neither are nonprofit institutions that only provide training programs of less than one year; and
- Be a resident of Montana and a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident of the United States.

"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."

The following information contains the general instructions that will need to be followed to make a student's application eligible for consideration:

1. The applications must be postmarked by **March 4, 2005**.
2. For each applicant, include original application (four pages) and one copy of the student's high school transcript showing units of credit totaling seven semesters, class rank, cumulative GPA and number of graduates in the class; or the GED transcript information. Please **highlight** the student's GPA, test scores, honors classes and AP classes on the transcript.
3. **General Information:** fill out completely and legibly.
4. **Plans for Higher Education:** enter those schools to which you have applied and/or received letters of acceptance. If you have already made a decision, let us know which school you have chosen.
5. **Goals and Objectives:** describe your educational goals and objectives. Do not use additional paper for your comments. This is an important part of your application; take the time to answer carefully and legibly.
6. **Activities:** list the school and community activities that you have been involved with during high school. Do not list paid employment.
7. Make sure that all spaces requiring a student's signature have been signed.
8. **Guidance Counselor Verification:** must be signed by the county superintendent.
9. It is important that you distinguish between Advanced Placement classes and Honors/Accelerated classes.

Advanced Placement refers to those courses developed by the College Board for high school students capable of completing entry-level college course work. AP courses are specifically designed to prepare students for the AP exam, successful completion of which generally can result in college credit for that course.

Honor/Accelerated refers to courses of generally more in-depth instruction offered to high-achieving students.

Please indicate whether the total number of courses offered are semester or full-year courses.

If you have any questions, please call Carol Gneckow, (406) 444-2417 or e-mail, cgneckow@state.mt.us. The 2005-06 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program Application can be found on the Web page <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Scholarships/index.html>.

Enclosures



Scholarships at Montana State

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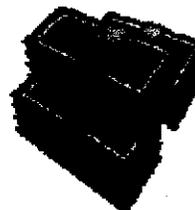
[Bobcat Athletics](#)

[Printable Campus Map \(PDF\)](#)

[The Exponent - \(Student Newspaper\)](#)

[MSU Bookstore - \(Shop For MSU Clothing And Accessories\)](#)

Montana State University awards millions of dollars in scholarships and waiver awards to new students who enter in the fall of each year. You might qualify for some of this money based on your academic record, financial need, group affiliation, or a combination of the three. **If you qualify, some freshman scholarships and awards are automatically awarded when you are offered admission to Montana State University.**



It is **essential** to apply for admission and have your ACT and/or SAT scores sent to Montana State University as soon as possible! **Some of these scholarships and awards may only be available for a limited time.**

Non-Resident Freshman Achievement Awards

Up to \$30,000 (\$7,500 per year renewable) will be awarded to non-resident freshmen entering MSU in the fall of 2005. **All non-resident achievement awards are renewable!**

Resident Freshman University Scholarships

Up to \$10,000 (\$2,500 per year renewable) will be awarded to Montana freshmen entering MSU in the fall of 2005.

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) Awards

A limited number of Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) Awards will be available to new **freshmen** for the 2005-06 academic year. Only legal residents of the following states may be considered for WUE Scholarships at Montana State University in Bozeman: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The first 120 **freshmen** who apply for admission and submit a 30 composite ACT (1320 total SAT) or greater will be offered this award which is worth more than \$30,000 over a four year period. WUE award recipients will be billed at a tuition rate which is only 150% of the resident tuition. New freshmen may retain their WUE Award for up to four academic years (8 semesters) as long as they maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average and are continuously enrolled as a full time WUE student.

The Presidential Scholarships

The Presidential Scholarships are Montana State University's most prestigious freshman scholarship awards, recognizing academic achievement as well as special personal qualities. Up to twenty Presidential Scholarships will be awarded to freshmen entering Montana State University in the fall of 2005. Recipients receive merit grants and annual resident fee waivers. Presidential Scholars classified as non-residents may also receive out of state fee waivers, subject to availability. Scholars who maintain the required academic standards may expect to have their awards renewed for four years. Presidential Scholars also receive admission to the Honors Program and are required to enroll in two semesters of Honors "Texts and Critics" courses. To be a competitive scholarship applicant, a cumulative gpa of 3.75 and a composite score of 30 on the ACT or 1320 total on the SAT are the expected norms. Exceptions to these norms must be indicated on your application. **The application deadline for fall 2005 awards is 10/15/04.**

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Scholarships

- [FAF](#)
- [Fres](#)
- [App](#)
- [Trar](#)
- [App](#)
- [Pres](#)
- [App](#)
- [Fine](#)

MSU Admissions
 120 Hamilton Hall
 P.O. Box 172190
 Bozeman MT, 59717
 1-888-MSU-CATS
Admissions@Montana.Edu

College and Departmental New Freshman and Transfers Scholarships

Many academic colleges and departments at Montana State University offer scholarships that reward excellence based solely on academic achievement. New students must complete either the freshman or transfer scholarship application and apply for admission prior to February 1, 2005 to be considered for fall 2005 College and Departmental awards. If financial need is one of the criteria for a college or departmental scholarship, it will be necessary for students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) prior to March 1, 2005.

Audition/Portfolio Review Scholarships

Some scholarship awards are available through music and theatre auditions, art and photograph portfolio review, and screening of videotapes and films. For specific details in these areas, contact the department directly: Music: (406) 994-3561; Media and Theater Arts (406) 994-2484; School of Art (406) 994-4501.

National Merit Scholarships

Students enter annual competition for Merit Scholarships as juniors by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). In September of the participant's senior year, approximately 15,000 are named Merit Program Semifinalists. Only Semifinalists continue in the competition, and they must qualify as Finalists in order to be considered for Merit Scholarships. To be a Finalist, each Semifinalist must meet a number of additional requirements that include being fully endorsed and recommended for Merit Scholarships consideration by the high school principal, submitting SAT scores that confirm their earlier PSAT/NMSQT scores, providing evidence of very high academic performance throughout secondary school, and giving information about their activities and accomplishments outside the classroom. College-sponsored Merit Scholarship recipients are chosen by officials of the sponsor college from among Finalists who report to National Merit Scholarship Corporation that the institution is their first choice. Winners selected by the college must have applied to that institution and be considered admissible by college officials. College-sponsored scholarships are not transferable. Montana State University in Bozeman is proud to sponsor three (3) Merit Scholarships each year. Students are eligible for a minimum of \$750/year and up to a maximum of \$2,000/year depending on financial need. College-sponsored Merit Scholarships require full-time attendance and are renewable for up to four years of undergraduate study. Contact your high school counselor for more information.

Native American Scholarships

Both need-based and academic scholarships are awarded to qualified Native American students. For need-based scholarships, applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and submit it to the processing center prior to March 1, 2005. For academic scholarships (not need-based) applicants should contact the Center for Native American Studies, P.O. Box 172340, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717-2340, (406) 994-3881.

Montana Indian Fee Waiver

The Montana Indian Fee Waiver is available to Montana residents who are one-fourth (1/4) enrolled with a federally recognized tribe and demonstrate financial need. For more information contact the MSU Office of Financial Aid at (406) 994-2845. Other funding opportunities for Native Americans can be found in the Native American College Funding Guide (pdf).

Athletic Scholarships

In addition to the University Admissions Standards, athletes must meet NCAA Big Sky requirements and MSU requirements for athletic financial assistance. Contact Intercollegiate Athletics, P.O. Box 173380, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717-3380, (406) 994-4221 for information about athletic opportunities.

Armed Forces Scholarships

Air Force and Army ROTC scholarships are available for qualified entering freshmen. Contact your local Army or Air Force Recruiting Center for details about these scholarships which may cover tuition, fees, books and include a monthly

Last name

First

Middle

Application for Montana State University-Bozeman 2005 Presidential Scholarship

The Presidential Scholarships

The Presidential Scholarships are Montana State University-Bozeman's most prestigious scholarship awards, recognizing academic achievement as well as special personal qualities that are described under "Selection Criteria." Up to twenty Presidential Scholarships will be awarded to freshmen entering Montana State University-Bozeman in September 2005. Recipients receive merit grants and annual resident fee waivers. Presidential Scholars classified as non-residents may also receive out-of-state fee waivers, subject to availability. Scholars who maintain the required academic standards may expect to have their awards renewed for four years. Presidential Scholars also receive admission to the University Honors program and are required to enroll in two semesters of Honors "Texts and Critics" courses.

Eligibility

- Applicants must apply for admission to Montana State University - Bozeman as entering freshmen
- To be a competitive scholarship applicant, a cumulative GPA of 3.75 and a composite score of 30 on the ACT or 1320 on the SAT are the expected norms. Exceptions to these norms must be indicated on your application, e.g., English is your second language; you have a learning disability; you are a student over traditional age; there have been special circumstances.
- There are no restrictions to fields of academic interest, age, financial need, or marital status.

Selection Criteria

- Students will be selected as finalists on the basis of their academic accomplishments, intellectual or creative distinctions, extracurricular activities, letters of reference, and original essays. Finalists will be invited to campus for a required interview with members of the Selection Committee.
- Students who will contribute to the intellectual and community life of Montana State University are identified by the committee, which looks for qualities such as intelligence, self-reliance, energy, imagination, originality, and concern for others. The scholarships are not only awarded to honor past achievements but also as investments in the future.

Application Deadline

The application together with all related documentation must be postmarked no later than **October 15, 2004** and sent to the Presidential Scholarship Selection Committee. Notification of finalists will be in December 2004. Interviews will be scheduled January 27-29, 2005. You may write or call the University Honors Program if you have any questions. Phone: (406) 994-4110, Fax: (406) 994-6747, or Email: honors@montana.edu. Send your application to: Presidential Scholarship Committee, University Honors Program, P.O. Box 172140, Montana State University-Bozeman, Bozeman, MT 59717-2140.

Please type, make one copy of this application, and send both copies to the address above.

I wish to be considered for a Presidential Scholarship. I have made separate application for admission to Montana State University - Bozeman and have read and agree to all conditions stipulated for candidates for Presidential Scholarships. I include in this application items I, II, III, and IV (on pages 2-3). I have arranged that confidential letters of reference (V, on page 3) written on my behalf will be sent by their authors directly to the Presidential Scholarship Committee, postmarked no later than October 15, 2004.

Signed

Mailing Address

Date

City, State, Zip Code

Male Female

Sex

Social Security Number

Phone

E-Mail

