



EXHIBIT 9
DATE 2-14-05
HB HB 578

Testimony in Support of HB 578

The Montana Dental Hygienists' Association (MDHA) voices strong support for the regulation of vending machines in public schools. Our association is dedicated to improving the health and welfare of ALL the citizens of Montana. MDHA believes that all foods and beverages sold out of school vending machines should make a positive contribution to a child's diet and health. Carbonated soft drinks are of particular concern.

Currently, soft drinks, often referred to as "liquid candy", have become the beverage of choice among the nation's youth. Soft drinks contribute the leading source of added sugar in the diet of the young, leading to obesity, tooth decay, decreased bone density and other health problems. Teenage boys and girls drink twice as much soda pop as milk. Besides sugar, soft drinks contain phosphoric acid, which can also break down tooth structure. As dental professionals we have witnessed the devastation of "Mountain Dew mouth", teeth riddled by decay caused by frequent exposure to sugar and acid. No one "profits" from this adverse affect on the health and welfare of our youth.

From an early age, children should be guided and encouraged to form healthy lifetime habits and make good choices. Besides parents, our schools should be leaders in this guidance. There is no "downside" to supporting better nutrition in schools. We don't want to sell out the present and future health of our children.

MDHA asks for support of this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Ullman, MDHA President