

EXHIBIT 6
DATE 3/23/05
SB 419

Loren Bough Testimony

Representative Galvin-Halcro and Committee Members:

For the record, my name is Loren Bough and I am a businessman, husband, and father of young children living in Big Sky. I moved back to Montana for quality of life and to raise my family. I grew up on a farm and cattle ranch in Highwood Montana and graduated from one of the smallest public high schools in the state. There were only six students in my graduating class. It was one of the greatest experiences of my life.

The State of Montana is interested in holding on to its graduates and drawing back its citizens who have left the state for better job opportunities. It is increasingly successful in this goal, it leads to an inevitable geographical shift in the population which creates the need to address changing school infrastructure and location. For people like myself and others returning to Montana the state says "Come back, raise a family and start a business." We say "Here we are, we need some educational support." Senate Bill #419 is vital in this process.

Today we've talked to you about the overall quality of the education for the child, safety of children on a dangerous commute, hardship of normal family life, negative impact on economic growth for our community and the state of Montana.

There is one more, extremely reason for supporting legislation. Over ten years less than 50 percent of the graduates of Ophir have followed the path created by the State of Montana. For the majority of students from Big Sky, attending school in Bozeman simply doesn't work.

Senate Bill 419 has the support of the Montana School Board Association, the Ophir School Board, the Chamber of Commerce of Big Sky, the Big Sky Owners Association, the three largest employers in Big Sky, and broad support throughout the community as evidenced by the letters you've received this week. I ask your support as well