

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a testimonial of my opinion and wants for this legislature to consider regarding the decision of SB 152. First, I wish to thank each one of you who serve the public of Montana and I appreciate your concerns pertaining to this almost overwhelming subject of "Education".

My first area of concern is that this Bill contains a much too broad spectrum of interest of which would be very expensive to the state and therefore to the populous of our already highly taxed property owners. I believe this Bill is asserting too much involvement into the responsibilities of people and therefore as people are expecting the state through government provision to accept this responsibility they will fall prey to the cycle of the more that the government does and the less the people have to do, the more the governing officials will be required to do. Therefore, the more responsibility that is placed in the hands of governing officials, the more possibility there is for a type of ownership to develop in the administration of these processes and that is not what was originally the purpose of our government. It was to be "Of the people, by the people, for the people". Our system of governing was never meant to be "Father" to all the children that exist in our state. I believe that you as elected officials are to come under the people and not over the people. Instead, I would like to see this Bill start out on more of a conservative focus of pure academics, and broaden as the need for real academics presents itself. I believe that the public school system, and therefore our government, is not responsible for providing social training pertaining to sexual preference, sexual behavior, diversity tolerance, or childcare development.

The second point I would like to speak of is that to develop a strategy of education that deals with all of the areas of which this Bill pertains to would be very costly and it appears that the Governor is already instituting other costly programs and therefore the financial burden falls mostly on the consistently working, self-employed, small businesses, and retired or elderly. Because this state carries a low population, this large burden falls on too few. Just as a person building a house is only accredited to the level of his/her ability to pay for it, I believe that everything that we as Montanans do should have that same ethic appropriated in governing our spending whether it comes to education, Indian research and study, public assistance or any other government funded entity.

Thank you for attention to this matter and for giving me the opportunity to speak in your session today.

Sincerely,

Karen Lester