

EXHIBIT	1
DATE	2-18-05
HB	692



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Good morning state legislatures. It is a cold and beautiful day in Missoula Montana and as I start the morning I want to support a wonderful concept that includes Montana's indigenous people in the picture. First of all let me state that I am in support of HB 692's definition that includes Montana's Constitutional obligation to Indian education as a part of the "quality education" definition and this is important to me as an educator, a grandparent raising a son in the local public schools, and as I hear folks talk around the state that has me a little concerned that they tend to leave out American Indians in the educational context.

As an educator, I do believe it is important to have quality education and that it should be available for everyone. However, when defining quality education, there are certain aspects within the Montana educational scene that is important to its indigenous population. That is to understand the importance of what American Indians, especially those residing in this area long before any settlers arrived and who continue to survive in the region.

It is their history that is important as well as acknowledgement that their ancestral role in maintaining this beautifyu land was as good as any steward in maintaining one with nature. So, with your committee structure, I would hope that you look at this bill and I urge the committee members to pass HB 698 out of committee.

Thanks you for your time and I hope you can get out and enjoy some of the beauty that this land holds not only in the geographical aspect but the diversity of its peoples.

Thanks you,

Patrick Weasel Head, Ph.D.

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Cc: "Patty LaPlant" &lt;plaplant@missoulahousing.org&gt;

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Ms. Norma Bixby,

I was born and raised on the Blackfeet reservation and my experience in the public schools there, were not always good. While attending elementary school I never questioned the curriculum and standards the teachers taught by, I was too young to understand the importance of questioning what I was taught. After getting into high school and college I often questioned why I was lied to throughout my schooling on the reservation and never taught the history of my people, my land, and my country. I have found more and more that I have become resentful in certain instances to the public school systems in Montana. I say Montana because I am now married to a Native American man from New Mexico, learning and talking of the type of history they were taught when he was in grade school, has everything to do with who they are, where they came from, who their ancestors are, they have answers to their questions, without having to go above and beyond the lies that have been taught here in Montana about the Native Americans that have been here for thousands of years. It's like they chose to leave out many, many years of history, so as not to take responsibility for all the hurt that they have brought upon so many.

Sharon LaPlant  
Blackfeet[Download this as a file](#)**Attachments:**[untitled-\[2\]](#) 2.2 k [text/html] [download](#) | [view](#)[Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Delete & Prev](#) | [Delete & Next](#)Move to:

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House Bill 692 is up for hearing today. Please support this bill.

The Montana Constitution framers placed strong language in 1972. We have as a state been neglectful of this Constitutional intent for 33 years. Article X Section 1(1), (2), (3) tell us what education will be provided all citizens of Montana. In the MQEC lawsuit, the complexity of providing this education is once again under scrutiny.

One of the most solid findings within this lawsuit is the absence of implementation and support for Section 1(2). In 1999 House Bill 528 was passed as the second attempt to implement this section (the first in 1972 was ineffective), and has since been codified as MCA 20-1-501, Indian Education for All.

Much of the discussion this legislature is debating the definition of quality. However, in most conversations Indian Education for All is treated as if it were separate. That is not how the Constitution states the value. That is not how the Supreme Court decision reads. This has not happened in our history, and we have the opportunity to right this wrong.

It is costly to provide information for a segment of schools, and will be costly to provide Indian education for K-12 education in all schools. It will include professional development for teachers already employed, curriculum materials for all school districts, multi-age appropriate materials that begin with basics and develop to an understanding of the intricacies of a sovereign government within the federal structure with ties to state structure as well.

For 33 years after the success of Constitutional reform that addresses the "cultural integrity" of Montana Indians, attempts have been made to raise awareness of educators, and policy has been made inclusive of Indian education. This is only the opening of the door. We now need support to develop the processes to deliver meaningful, accurate, and essential knowledge to all students in the state.

With your support, this bill will lead us in the right direction. Vote yes for HB 692.

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From: **Joe Anderson** <[joanderson@helena.k12.mt.us](mailto:joanderson@helena.k12.mt.us)> [Add](#)

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Dear Legislator,

I would like to encourage you to support HB698. As a Native American educator for thirty-six years in a predominately all white high school, I have sadly discovered how little my students know about their neighbors - Native Americans coexisting in the same state. It's more than just the fact of knowing that there are seven reservations in Montana. I submit to you, the history of Indian people belongs in the shared history of the triumphs and tragedies of this great state. Those reframing Montana's constitution in 1972 recognized the need to add Indian people to the historically significant ranks of Montana citizenry. Now, the opportunity avails our elected ones to seize the moment and embrace Indian education for all Montanans. Vote YES to HB698! Thank you for all your hard work. Continued success this session. Joseph Anderson

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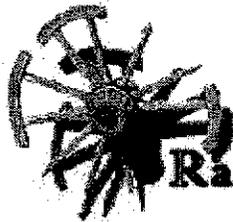
Ms. Bixby

re testify on Feb 18th. I cannot make it to the session and I am therefore forwarding my e-mail support to you.

In reference to this most important Bill, the "quality of education" for American Indian children, has to be at a high standard in order that the children can develop their full educational potential and be able to continue on to College or University. This would allow for unlimited choices for the children to decide upon a professional career of their choice. Whether it be in the education, info technology, law/justice or medical field or any other field of their choice. Included in the quality of education there has to be incorporated the cultural integrity in order that the children never lose their cultural identity and also retain their tribal languages. Furthermore, the more a child has access to quality education the more likely they are going to want to continue onto higher education and of course then they are more able to avoid getting caught up in any potential criminal activity. They will be self sufficient and very confident in life.

Jim Mason  
Native American Liaison  
Dept.

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Respectfully Submitted To Norma Bixby

I am a trustee with the Ronan School District #30. Our district is over 50% Native American population and our children are failing in this school. They also account for over 75% of the In-school suspensions. At our board meeting last week, we discussed in detail the number of students that have transferred to Two Eagle River School in the prior 2 weeks or so. I urged the school to look at this because it greatly affects our budget.

It is so important that people understand that when we are talking about "quality education", this includes the obligation to Indian education as stated in the Montana Constitution.

I urge you to pass HB 698 out of committee.

Patty Stevens  
Trustee  
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