EXHIBIT 1
DATE Jan 14 2005
HB

Good morning Madame Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Tim Crowe and I live here in Helena. I am here today as the voice of my two year old son Cale, who has been receiving the awesome services provided by the resources funded through Part C of the Developmental Disability Program. I first want to thank you for allowing my family the opportunity to express our appreciation for the funding and support the State of Montana has provided to Cale during the past eighteen months. The efforts and positive funding measures your committee has made in the past have allowed thousands of Montana children to develop far beyond what they could have otherwise. I am honored this morning to help represent the more than 1200 children and their families from Montana who receive services through the Part C program who can't be here today and try to convey to you just how important these programs and services are to us.

Life does not prepare you very well for the challenges and struggles that accompany having a child with special needs. Just over a year ago, my wife Michelle and I heard for the first time that our son Cale was born with Cerebral Palsy. It is difficult, if not impossible, to explain the emotional spectrum accompanying the news that your child is not, and most likely will never be like all the other (quote) "normal kids" in the world. At first glance he may seem like a very normal child unaffected by most of the visible signs his condition inflicts on children his age. But looks are deceiving and the challenges and delays Cale is fighting to overcome are very real. He is still a little too young to completely diagnose the extent of his challenges, but through the efforts of many talented and caring people we have identified his general limitations.

Michelle and I feel very fortunate that the medical professionals working with Cale were able to identify his condition as early as they did. Research shows that the earlier a child enters a therapy program the greater the long-term benefits are, and therefore reduce the reliance on third party funding sources. Fortunately for Cale, we were able to start him into a very aggressive therapy program when he 14 months and his results continue to be outstanding. His physical advancements are very visible now. Cale's ability to walk and communicate his needs through the use of sign language is the direct result of the resources provided by you through the Part C program. I am absolutely convinced that without the help we have received from Part C, Cale would not be mobile or able to communicate with us.

In January of 2004 my obligations to the Montana Air National Guard demanded that I temporarily relocate to Texas. Initial we feared that the help Part C provides us would be suspended until our return. Thankfully we discovered that this type of program was offered in Texas and the great folks at Family Outreach, located right here in Helena, helped us tremendously with our transition. Cale didn't miss a beat and was receiving the same care within the first week we got there. Upon our return in April, Cale picked right back up with his previous schedule and is continuing to progress.

I have closely witnessed Cale's therapy program and the flow of resources required to treat him over the past several months. It is only through living this experience that one can come to understand the magnitude of the challenges families with special needs children face. Two years ago I couldn't imagine the amount of medial bills and insurance co-payments we would be required to pay. The monthly co-payments alone would easily fund a mortgage payment for a very nice home here in Helena. It is an impossible decision to have to choose between paying for the basic needs of your family or the health care requirements of your infant son. Fortunately, most Montana families are not required to make this tough choice because you and your colleagues in the Montana State Legislature have wisely decided to fund programs like Part C.

Michelle and I are truly blessed to have her fill the role of a stay at home mom. Performing the duties of this position description under normal conditions is a difficult and demanding task. However, throw in the demands of a child with special needs and the results are more than a full time job. The logistical requirements she deals with on a daily basis astounds me and I am humbled by her efforts to ensure Cale receives everything necessary to grow up and live the most normal life he can. Single parent families and families where both parents are required to work face far greater challenges. If these parents were able to be up here today speaking with you, I am confident they would explain just how difficult it is to manage the duties required of them at work and maintain the energy level necessary to ensure their child gets the medical care they need. You and I can't possibly imagine the daily decisions they are forced to make in order to keep their child progressing.

In July of this year, Cale will no longer be eligible to receive the services provided through the Part C program. But, that is ok because it will allow other children to begin receiving these resources and begin developing to their

greatest potential. Many of the families who will be receiving the resources you will hopefully provide this session have not yet learned that their child has a disability because of their young age. If they did know, I am confident they would be here today asking for your support to fund the Developmental Disability Program. My wife and I feel we have an obligation and responsibility to be here today and speak on behalf of these children much like someone did for us several years ago. I believe everyone here today has a duty to continue this legacy provided through the Part C program

Your attendance here today is truly appreciated by all of us dependent on the services offered by the Part C program. I am sure you have spent much time contemplating the duties required of the offices you hold. However, I venture to say that you may not have considered the absolute power you hold over the future of my son and the hundreds of other children of this state. You are empowered to decide if children like Cale continue to get the opportunity to develop into the young men and women our hopes and dreams hang on. You hold the financial purse strings to continue to invest in the future of our children. For us, there is no more important line item in the budget, and as far as I am concerned, you will debate and decide no more important issue than the resources allocated to the Part C program. As you continue to do great work for our State, please keep a close eye on this piece of the pie and commit to all the young children of this great state that these important resources remain available for their use.

I want to thank you again for you attendance today and your selfless service to our State and Country.

Presented by: Tim Crowe
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