

Oppose HB 5 as long as it contains \$1,808,000 project called "Upgrade 1100 North Last Chance Gulch".

By: Taran Denning, 6th Grade Student at Helena Middle School

- This would be an anti-youth and anti-community project.
- This project would construct offices on the basketball court in the old Armory building.
- Helena doesn't have a sufficient number of gym spaces at the present time to meet the community's need
- This would take away this desperately needed gym.
- This building is near the center of town and next to the YMCA making it an ideal location for the existing gym. A much more logical location for a gym than additional State of Montana offices.
- It is more logical to construct new offices at the capital complex with this funding and to make this excellent gym space available to the community.

Mr Chairman members of the committee and for the record my name is Taran Denning I am a 6th grader at Helena Middle School. I am here today to oppose House Bill 5 or at least one specific project currently included in HB 5. I have handed out key points from my testimony.

Mr Chairman currently included in HB5 is a project for 1.8 million dollars called Upgrade 1100 North Last Chance Gulch. 1100 North Last Chance Gulch is **THE** old Armory here in Helena. This project would construct offices on the beautiful basketball court in the armory.

Mr Chairman this project is **anti-community and anti-youth!!!** It makes absolutely no sense for the State of Montana to spend 1.8 MILLION dollars to build office spaces on this gorgeous basketball court. This basketball court is in the center of Helena AND right next to the YMCA. This makes no sense to do this when the city of Helena doesn't have nearly the amount of gym space it desperately needs.

I LOVE the game of basketball as do MANY others in Helena. At the present time Helena desperately needs more gyms. I personally, along with hundreds of other Helena youth, have had to practice until 9:00 or later on school nights. I have been doing this since I was 8 years old just because Helena doesn't have the gyms which it needs. At the present time there are organizations, at least 2 that I have heard of, that are talking about how to raise the funding, as much as a million dollars, to build gym space here in this community due to the shortage.

With this proposed project, the State of Montana would spend 1.8 million to take a gym away from the community. Mr Chairman and committee members, a million dollars from the community to build a gym AND 1.8 million from the State of Montana tax payers to take one away from the community...DO the math! It doesn't add up! 2.8 million and we would have the same number of gyms that we have now and one more set of State offices next to the YMCA.

Why doesn't the State spend the 1.8 million to build new office space **up here on the capital complex**? Wouldn't that make more sense? And wouldn't it make more sense to make this gym available to the youth AND grownups in the community? Remember this is a gym which already exists, which is in the center of town, next to the YMCA, has a beautiful solid wooden floor, outstanding baskets and backboards AND even has a scoreboard!!!

Again MR. Chairman and members of the committee I URGE you to NOT support House Bill 5 as long as it contains this particular project. It is not in the best interests of the youth, the community, the citizens of Helena and the citizens and taxpayers of the State of Montana!

Mr. Chairman ~ pending any questions, that is all I have for now!

Thank you.