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Gallatin Valley Domestic Abuse Intervention Program

Noah - Jane Davis
(406) 586-6224

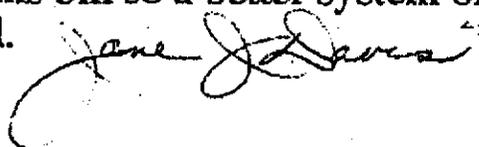
4470 White Eagle Circle
Bozeman, MT 59715

As providers of a domestic abuse intervention program we are most interested in the passage of House Bill 476, sponsored by Dave McAlpin.

According to Montana Code 45-5-206 'an offender convicted of partner or family member assault is required to pay for and complete a counseling assessment...and complete all recommendations for counseling, referrals, attendance at psychoeducational groups or treatment'. Our job is to hold them accountable and provide the education for change. However, there is just not enough oversight. In all the investigations into the efficacy of domestic abuse intervention programs I have read, the number one problem is making sure the men attend and complete the program. Last year at least 20 men either did not begin or did not complete our program with evidentially no consequences.

When men find they can escape the consequences of their actions they escape any personal responsibility and lose respect for the justice system. This puts women in a more vulnerable position - he may blame her and punish her for his embarrassment and she cannot trust the system again to keep her and her family safe.

Although I believe strongly in education, batterers intervention programs are only a part of keeping these families safe. Without supervision by the court with compliance officers there is little consequence for the offenders and less safety for families. Therefore we urge passage of this bill so a better system of accountability can be instigated.



ALTERNATIVES FOR MEN