EXHIBIT 8
2/11/05
577

February 10, 2005

Regarding: House Bill 577

First STEP Resource Center, a Children's Advocacy Center sponsored by St. Patrick Hospital & Health Sciences Center, Missoula, Montana, provides forensic medical evaluations for victims of all ages who have experienced sexual violence.

Many victims are self-referred and are uncertain about whether to report the violence to law enforcement or not. They come to the Center with many needs for medical and mental health services, as well as, a good forensic examination.

A fund to support forensic medical evaluations for victims of sexual assault may encourage more victims to seek care.

I support this bill for victims of sexual assault who have no means to pay for a forensic medical evaluation.

-Jane Dubbe, First STEP Coordinator
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