EXHIBIT 1
DATE 1-13-05
HB 165

HB 165: 1-year student regent term
Rep. Kevin Furey, HD 91

Mr. Chair / members of the committee

I am Representative Kevin Furey and I represent the South Eastern corner of Missoula County. In recent years the student regent appointment process has become a point of contention. HB 165 is one attempt to better control that process and to bring more accountability to the student regent.

The student regent plays a pivotal role on the board of regents and if this legislation is passed the student regent will continue to play a pivotal role on the board of regents. Having terms set at one year better reflects the position on the board that the student regent represents and the realities of college life. 16 of the 22 student regents that have served, one year or very close to one year. This bill would standardize what has been normal for most of the student regent's term. University Students in Montana attend college on average for three to five years. It is unreasonable to appoint a student regent for a four-year term, which is allowed under current statute.

HB 165 does allow for regents to serve successive one-year terms. Student regents can be reappointed. A reappointment by the governor would follow the same process that an appointment would follow. I made sure of this through e-mail correspondence with the bill drafter, Greg Petsch. I attempted to place an amendment to make sure that this was a clear. When I requested Greg to add; "The student regent may be reappointed to succeeding terms, provided that the student regent has been re-nominated by a student organization designated by the board of regents." His response was that the bill already provides for this.

This bill would not apply to the current student regent. This bill only applies to further appointments of student regents. There will not be another appointment of a student regent until 2007.

This bill would make sure that student regents are representing students. If the student organization designated by the board of regents does not deem a student regent worthy or re-appointment, then the student regent will not be re-appointed regardless to what the governor thinks.

This bill would make student regents more accountable for their votes and their representation. It would make the system more fair and regular. It would also provide more opportunities for Montana University students to participate in the rule making process.

I urge your support for this bill and welcome any testimony and questions.