

March 9, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

One October 2, 2004, my life was forever changed. My partner who I always trusted to protect me attempted to kill me.

My injuries were so severe that I was air lifted from Sidney Health Center to Billings Deaconess Hospital. I suffered facial trauma, contusions, abrasions, a thoracic injury with rib fractures and a punctured lung which required chest tube insertion. I also had bruises around my neck from strangulation.

Upon my release from the hospital, I contacted Helen Schmitt, the program director of Domestic Violence. She brought to my attention MCA 39-51-2111, temporary unemployment benefits for victims of domestic violence. I was continually denied due to my inability to work. I appealed the decision twice, and the decision was overturned on March 3, 2005.

During this time, I had no income except for \$278.00 per month from crime victim's compensation. I have been forced to sell almost everything I own to survive. I am also selling my home because I can not afford to make the mortgage payments.

I feel that when a person is so severely injured due to Domestic Violence that they should not be denied temporary unemployment due to injuries sustained during the attack.

My abuser had never shown me cause to fear him. After being heard by a neighbor, he ran downstairs and shot his face off.

He is in one of the best reconstructive facilities in the United States and over two million dollars has been spent on his surgeries. He convalesces in a nursing home between surgeries and is able to go as he pleases.

He will be charged with aggravated assault after his surgeries are complete. Why can so much money be spent on the attacker, and none for the victim?

Please reconsider how the wording of 39-51-2111 eliminates victims who are too injured to work.

Thank You,

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