



SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

OF
MONTANA

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SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 4

DATE 2-14-05

BILL NO. SB-291

February 14, 2005

Vice-Chairman Gillan and members of the Senate Education and Cultural Resources Committee,

For the record, my name is Darrell Rud, Executive Director of the School Administrators of Montana.

I would like to convey support on behalf of the School Administrators of Montana for **SB291** identified as the *quality home school and child protection act*.

I, personally, and members of the School Administrators of Montana who have shared their viewpoints with me, respect those parents who make the choice of home schooling that provides their children with a quality education full of documented learning, high quality instruction, safety and love!

It was my good fortune to have two loving parents who were my first and best teachers and I wish the same for all of Montana's children!

In our August 2003 Delegate Assembly, the representatives of our affiliates discussed the possible need for a resolution that addressed concerns about home school issues. The two concerns about home schools that were the primary focus of this portion of the assembly's discussion were:

- When the parent(s) of a home schooled student and/or the student decides to reenter the public school setting, there often is difficulty in placing the student at the proper level when there are limited or no records of prior instruction or documented levels of learning;
- How to advocate for students in home schools where there are possible health and safety issues due to suspected and/or documented instances of neglect and/or abuse? The majority of these cases happen when a home school was hastily established to circumvent mandatory attendance and/or other issues related to Child Protective Service inquiries.

The Assembly passed the following resolution that was subsequently adopted by the association's members at our membership meeting in October of 2003:

Resolution #03-06 HOME SCHOOLS
 WHEREAS: SAM believes education is the cornerstone of American democracy and;
 WHEREAS: Alternative options such as home schooling have been authorized by state legislation and;
 WHEREAS: Montana has a very liberal law concerning home schooling. This creates situations that are not consistent with a quality education as defined by the State Constitution and;
 WHEREAS: The liberalization of this law can and does enable families to avoid the schooling of the child or provide only a minimal schooling and;
 WHEREAS: It is difficult to place home school students at the proper level in the public system;
 BE IT RESOLVED: That SAM supports legislation that strengthens the accountability of home schools in Montana.
 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: Resources and authority should be provided to make certain that those who exercise these options are held strictly accountable for the academic achievement, safety and social/emotional growth of children.

It is the hope of the School Administrators of Montana that strengthening of laws with respect to home schools will help insure that no Montana student gets left behind!

Thank you for your consideration of this request to vote for SB291!

Sincerely,



Darrell Rud
Executive Director
School Administrators of Montana