

81 Saint Benedict Lane
Ovando, MT 59854
February 2, 2005

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 33

DATE 2-14-05

BILL NO. SB-291

Senator Don Ryan, Chairman
P. O. Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Dear Senator:

I am Sue Lapka, I live at 81 Saint Benedict Lane, Ovando, MT 59854.

Over the past 26 years I have used primarily home schooling, with some private and public schools to educate my children. I have been a school district trustee for three terms. I also have experience in dealing with abilities ranging from gifted to learning disabled- all my own children.

I home school for a variety of reasons. Number one is that I have the God given responsibility for the education of my children. Number two is that each child can be challenged to his or her abilities and time is not wasted on things they already know.

SB291 demands testing be done on certain subjects at certain times. I would have to teach to test which would defeat the purpose of testing. Testing is a tool to help the teacher find out what the child does not know so that these areas may be addressed. There are many methods of presenting subject matter and all things are not taught at the same level in all methods. So testing would be unfair to the child as he had not yet studied that concept. This would violate my right to direct my child's education, select the curriculum, and evaluate their progress per (20-5-11-MCA). Testing has never been done before in Montana and would be an invasion of the privacy of the family. Also, sending test results to the school district would violate the student's privacy.

There is no evidence that would support the need for a parent to be a certified teacher or be supervised. I present evidence present evidence that a parent need not have a college education to successfully teach her own children. I have a daughter that holds 2 undergraduate degrees, a degree in Chemistry and a Doctorate in Pharmacy; another daughter that holds a degree from Montana Tech; another daughter that holds a Business degree with an International Endorsement form the University of Montana; and a son that holds an Associate Degree in Applied Science-Welding Technology from Northern Idaho College. I have two sons that are owners in the construction industry. The rest of my children are at various places in primary and secondary school.

This bill would eliminate the home education of disabled children. I have a disabled child. No one knows a child better than a parent. I have successfully home schooled my own disabled child and brought her as far as she is able to go. This bill would impose an extra expense on a family. We already pay taxes like everyone else, plus buy our own curriculums and books.

Only eight states require testing as the only means of evaluating a home instruction program, and no state requires home school children to be tested on state content standards. Studies have shown that increased state oversight of home schooling does not result in higher academic achievement.

Forty-six states now permit persons other than biological parents to teach a child at home, and only nine states require a parent to have a high school diploma or a GED. SB291 would impose unnecessary regulations on home schoolers. The goal of education is to give a child the tools to become a responsible adult; to get a job; raise a family; and be a good citizen. Current Montana home school law is successful as it now stands. Please vote NO on SB291.

I have enclosed letters from some of my children who are now adults. They wanted to let you hear from the student side.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sue Lapka
81 Saint Benedict Lane
Ovando, MT 59854

8796 E. Gold Pan Drive
Palmer, Alaska 99645
February 2, 2005

Senators of the Education Committee
Montana State Senate
Helena, MT

Dear Senator:

I feel that it is my duty, as a former Montana resident and a United States citizen, to let you know my thoughts on SB291. I have experience from the student side of the home school issue.

Growing up in Montana, I attended home school, some private school, and some public school. I feel the structure and education received in home school helped me achieve academically through high school as well as college; ultimately leading me to success with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Technology and Development at a top rated school, currently known as Montana Tech of the University of Montana.

My mother was a great teacher to myself as well as my siblings. We have all furthered our education and went on to work great jobs and live successful lives.

I feel that this was possible because the current laws of Montana adequately provided for a quality education in home school for me and my siblings. Our children are our ultimate responsibility and I truly believe parents know best for a child. Bill SB291 would limit our rights as parents. I am asking you to please vote NO on SB291.

Sincerely,

Patricia Watson
8796 E. Gold Pan Drive
Palmer, AK 99645

8796 East Gold Pan Drive
Palmer, Alaska 99645
February 1, 2005

Dear Senator,

I have recently been made aware of Bill SB291. I received my early education in a home school environment in Montana. I then proceeded to excel in my private and public school classes. Following high school, I went on to receive two undergraduate degrees and a doctorate degree. I know that my home school foundation made this possible.

It is the right of parents to teach their children. This bill would take away or seriously undermine this right. Even though I no longer live in Montana, I would like you to know the positive effect that home school has had on my education. I want for my siblings to be able to have this same experience.

Please vote NO on SB291.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Andrea Lapka, Pharm.D.
8796 East Gold Pan Drive
Palmer, AK 99645

February 2, 2005

Dear Senators,

It has been brought to my attention that SB291 has come before your committee. Having been raised in Montana, where my family still lives, and been home schooled, I would like to give you my perspective.

I received a home school education which helped structure my life when I was young. I graduated from a public high school and then continued my education in college. I hold an Associates Degree in Applied Science-Welding Technology. I am currently using my degree working on the North Slope for Conoco-Philips in the Alaska oil fields.

Most of my siblings have received a higher education and hold degrees. They are all leading productive, successful lives.

I feel that it is the responsibility of the parent to see to the education of their children, not the state. I would like to see the laws as they are now, kept so that the rest of my siblings can receive the same education I did.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,

Christopher Lapka
8796 E. Gold Pan Drive
Palmer, AK 99645