

Senate Bill 383
Points for consideration

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 18

DATE 2-16-05

BILL NO. SB-383

Offered by Janice Nugent, M.A., C.C.C.
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State Education Advocacy Leader, the Montana Speech Language and Hearing
Association.

- ◆ **Montana teachers who are accredited by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) receive a one-time stipend of \$3000.00. Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists serve all public schools in Montana. They are not eligible for NBPTS accreditation, but can be certified by the American Speech Hearing and Language Association (ASHA), with standards at least as rigorous. Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists should receive a stipend for this certification.**
- ◆ **Speech and Language therapy services are the most common form of special education in the state of Montana.**
- ◆ **Because of our unique education and experience we are able to offer vital educational services to children with significant disabilities as well as to children who can learn well in general education, but have some difficulties communicating. Communication skills are vital to all children.**
- ◆ **Montana has no training facility for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. The nationwide shortage of professionals in our field is intensified here, aggravated by factors such as long distances, large caseloads and relatively low pay.**
- ◆ **Recognition of our high professional standards with this stipend will be a powerful recruiting tool.**
- ◆ **There are more private sector employment opportunities for speech language pathologists than in past years. A stipend will keep the best speech language pathologists in the schools. Our children deserve that, just as they deserve the best teachers.**