SENATE EDUCATION
EXHIBIT NO. 2
DATE 3-2-05
BILL NO. SB-496

My name is Denice Harris. I stand before you today on behalf of 102,000 AAA Montana Members in support of SB496.

AAA has long advocated comprehensive, ongoing traffic safety education programs to educate road users of all ages on responsible and safe traffic behaviors, including respect for traffic laws and other road users.

These education programs should be based on a positive approach; be repeated and continue to reinforce desirable behaviors, start in early childhood and continue through out the life cycle; focus on collision causation factors, and finally encompass all elements of the traffic environment, including pedestrian, bicyclist, driver, highway, and vehicle.

Learning to successfully navigate Montana's roadways is like building a house: You need knowledge, skills and plans. Without a solid foundation, a big risk is taken each time some gets behind the wheel; a risk that endangers not only the driver, but everyone else on the road as well.

Unfortunately, without funding, this foundation will not be possible.

The state of Montana has the right, and indeed the responsibility to govern the issuance of driver's license, however, Montana owes it to each driver on the road to provide the tools necessary to continually educate each driver from teens to seniors on the correct and safe way to drive.

We strong urge you to support SB496.