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Mothers Against Drunk Driving
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Date 3-2-05
No. HB 46

HB 46 Vehicular Homicide

For the record my name is Bill Muhs, from Bozeman. I am currently the Public Policy Liaison for MADD-Gallatin County. I am also a victim of drunk driving, having lost a daughter to a drunk driver.

Death in a collision caused by a drunk driver is not an accident! It is a violent crime caused by the drunk driver's reckless disregard for human life when he or she gets behind the wheel of a motor vehicle. There is nothing "negligent" about such a tragedy and victims cringe when they hear this term after their loved ones have been killed by a drunk driver! The current law of negligent homicide diminishes the true nature of the crime in the view of the offenders, the public, and often the courts. Our courts have, on occasion, handed down such light sentences under DUI negligent homicide that it makes a mockery out of our judicial system in the eyes of many citizens and victims. Citizens of Montana have mentioned to me that the sanctions for poaching a bighorn sheep are steeper than some past sentences under the current law. This is not a "feel good" bill but a bill that provides for the appropriate restitution for those who kill another human being while driving drunk.

Montana needs to send a strong message to our drunk drivers. We need to balance the punishment with the crime. Our sanctions must be certain, swift, and significant. This bill increases the sanctions for those who kill another while operating a vehicle in violation of state laws. Montana is one of only five states without a Vehicular Homicide law. We urge you to support HB 46. Thank you.

Bill Muhs
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