

Exhibit No. 12
Date 3-11-05
Bill No. HB 474

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
HOUSE BILL 474
MARCH 11, 2005

By
Pat Schlauch, Publisher, the Helena Independent Record

Mr. Chairman and Members of the committee,

My name is Pat Schlauch. I am the publisher of the Helena Independent Record. Thank you for your time today.

We oppose House Bill 474. The bill removes from Montana the definition of a newspaper eligible to carry notices to the public for non municipal government activities.

We sell about 14,500 newspapers every day in the Helena /Lewis and Clark County trade area. This equates into about 33,300 readers every single day (and more on Sunday). Like most newspapers across Montana, our cost per thousand readers for county public notices is \$9.00 per folio (or one hundred words).

The legal notices published in the I.R. are also on our web site. On average 11,500 people visit our web site every day. We average about 54,000 page views per day or 1,650,000 page views per month on our web site.

Every day some 87,000 sets of eyes are on the I.R.'s content, including legal notices. We work hard to help county governments meet their affirmative constitutional duty to keep the people of this county informed about what government is doing. The same applies across Montana to newspapers large and small.

The current law works. Please defeat this bill. Thank you.