SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 2

DATE: 01-07-04

BILL NO. SB 33

Hearing Date: 01/7/2005
Hearing Room: 350
Hearing Time: 3 P.M.
Chair Person: Brent Cromley

PRC/ICC remarks to the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Safety.

Chairman Cromley, and members of the committee, for the record my name is Vicki Turner and I am staff to the Prevention Resource Center housed in DPHHS and previous staff to the Interagency Coordinating Council for State Prevention Programs. I am here today to provide information at the request of the sponsor, Senator Cobb. This is a DPHHS requested piece of legislation and thus support SB33.

The Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for State Prevention Program's mission is to create and sustain a coordinated, comprehensive system of prevention services in the state of Montana. The ICC was established in 1993, and at the time was not provided any financial resources, and subsequently over the years has operated on very limited, non-general fund dollars secured through an AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteer in Services to America) grant.

The ICC has five goals set toward reducing youth risk behaviors including the reduction of child abuse and neglect, youth substance use, youth violence, school drop-out and teen pregnancy.

To that end, some of the duties of the ICC include working across state government to share information and bring together multi-agency practices and policies, annually plan how the council will support a multi-agency approach to develop, implement, maintain, and evaluate prevention programs, establish benchmarks to measure the effectiveness and sustainability of prevention programs, and facilitate education that unites agencies in their focus on prevention. And, one of the statutory requirements established, has been submitting a unified budget of prevention programs to the Governor's Budget each biennium.

The intended purpose of the unified budget was to create a system of prevention funding streams that could be combined together to create a "pot" of resources for prevention planning and coordination as set forth by the ICC. The ICC selected a variety of state/federal programs for the unified budget because they assist the state to achieve one or more of the ICC goals, but is not indicative of all prevention programs in the state.

The unified budget is not a functional budget, and other than it's presentation in the Governor's Budget book each legislative session, **no action** is taken on it by the legislature. Budgetary decisions made by the legislature are program specific as each department's programs are presented to the legislative sub-committees. The unified budget is simply a roll up of the prevention programs, resources, and services currently being offered through the State of Montana. The responsibility for the unified budget has fallen the Prevention Resource Center, and requires approximately 120 hours or more of staff time to gather the information.

Given the lack of impact the unified budget has on policymaking decisions and prioritization of programs and services, to continue preparing the unified budget is a meaningless task.

At this time we ask that you remove the statutory requirement for a unified budget from the ICC statute, specifically, section 2(f) of 2-15-225 MCA, enacted in 1993.

Thank you.