SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY
EXHIBIT NO. 4
DATE: 2-2-5
BILL NO. SB 273

WHY DO WE NEED A MEDICAL SCHOOL IN MONTANA

My name is Tasneem Khaleel. I have been a Professor of Biology at Montana State University-Billings for the last 29 years. I am currently the Interim Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences at MSU-Billings. I urge you all to consider expanding the opportunities of medical education for our students through a medical school in Montana. I firmly and strongly believe that our students, rural communities and citizens of Montana are being asked to settle for the minimum when they deserve more. The WWAMI program alone is not sufficient to meet the growing medical needs of the state of Montana. We need to train more students who would like to come back to serve the state. Following are the reasons why we need a medical school in Montana.

- The government sees a physician shortage in the ensuing years.
- The national recommendation is that medical schools increase class size by 15%
- Medical schools nationwide are not able to meet the demand.
- As such Medical schools nationwide screen 1000-8000 applicants for approximately 50-150 available slots.
- Nationally there is a consistent increase in the number of applications.
- There was a 5% increase in the number of applications at University of Washington School of Medicine in 2004.
- University of Washington screened 3,000 applications for the class of 2004
- 21% of the entering students applied twice before and two applied three times.
- There are more than six WWAMI applicants for each available spot.
- WWAMI program clearly cannot accommodate all well qualified students.
- Because of the limited number of WWAMI slots available Montana students have to apply to at least 8-10 schools.
- Montana students face similar problems at other institutions because of the limited number of slots available for non-resident students. When they manage to get in to a medical school they end up paying ten times more for the same medical education, face the hardship of moving away from families and adjusting to culturally different environments.
- Like other states with medical schools, Montana needs to take care of Montana students who want to pursue medical education in Montana.
- Rural Montana communities need medical care provided by qualified medical doctors and physicians and not Physician Assistants.
- Because of the geographical location, it is difficult to attract qualified physicians to live in Montana.
- By providing medical education to our Montana students we will be improving healthcare in Montana, creating an economic boost and most importantly keep the cost of healthcare affordable.
- I understand the cost of Medical school is a serious consideration. However, I also believe that there are ways in which this could be done. Montana Medical School has the potential to become as renowned as any other medical school in the nation and can become self supporting in a short time.