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SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 2

DATE: 3-9-5

BILL NO. HB 396

Allergy & Asthma Network
Mothers of Asthmatics

January 25, 2005

Representative Arlene Becker
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Dear Representative Becker:

Founded in 1985, Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics (AANMA) strives to eliminate suffering and death due to asthma and allergies through education, advocacy, community outreach, and research. For the last decade, the organization assisted state and federal lawmakers to secure students' rights to carry and self-administer prescribed lifesaving asthma and anaphylaxis medications while at school and school-sponsored activities. Today, we thank you for your leadership in sponsoring HB 396, potentially lifesaving legislation for Montana students living with asthma and anaphylaxis.

Breathing is a right, not a privilege. Physicians prescribe lifesaving medications to patients, and with parental support, train students how to use these medications in a life-threatening emergency. However, not all schools protect students' rights to carry and self-administer emergency medications. Tragically, inconsistent school policies have led to student deaths across the country. In many cases, it has taken a student's death and subsequent lawsuit to prompt statewide legislation protecting students' rights.

On October 30, 2004, President signed HR 2023, the Asthmatics Schoolchildren's Treatment and Health Management Act of 2004, into law. States with laws protecting students will receive asthma-related funding preference from the federal government.

Bill HB 396 will qualify the state for this preference, create a uniform self-administration policy for all Montana schools, and enable students to focus on learning. Montana will join more than 30 states currently protecting these vital student rights. We commend you for your leadership and support of Montana students living with asthma and anaphylaxis.

On behalf of students who just want to breathe, thank you!

With warm regards,

Marissa Magnetti
Advocacy Network Coordinator

Sandra Fusco-Walker
Patient Advocate