

2 March 2005

Department of Military Affairs – Montana
Office of the Adjutant General
Colonel Joel Cusker

HB 227

Revising deferral of property taxes for active military personnel

Mr. Chairman, honorable members of the Senate Taxation Committee, Good-morning ... on behalf of Major General Randy Mosley, whom is today meeting with officials in our Nation's Capitol, I rise as a proponent of House Bill 227. I am Colonel Joel Cusker, a Montana Army National Guardsman.

On behalf of approximately 3,500 Soldiers and Airmen, who are today serving in the Montana National Guard in support of our communities, our State and our Nation, I would like to first thank this legislature for your progressive action in taking care of the men and women, as well as the employers and the families, of those who serve in our armed forces. I would also like to thank Representative Galvin-Halcro for her many years of service to the community of Great Falls, the State of Montana and for her sponsorship of House Bill 227.

Today the Montana National Guard has approximately 1,500 soldiers and airmen deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Noble Eagle ... of the 3,500 Montana Guardsmen assigned, it is anticipated that as high as 80% of the force will be deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism. House Bill 227 will provide a degree of comfort for those who are deployed - and more specifically provide comfort for two of our soldiers, and their families ... as these two soldiers are recuperating today at Walter Reed Memorial Hospital from injuries and wounds sustained in Iraq. The State of Montana does not need to cause these two soldiers, or their families, undue concern about delinquent taxes ... the citizens of Montana need them to concentrate their entire focus on getting well, once again - and then returning to us here in the Big Sky Country.

Again - thank you for your support of House Bill 227 and for your professional service to the men and women of the Montana National Guard.