

EXHIBIT 29
DATE 3-5-07
HB 808
03/04/2007

Joanna J. Hill
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Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 209-5777 or
(406) 209-4526

Dear Senators,

I have been informed by my daycare establishment, Green Wood Academy, that our childcare assistance may soon come to an end due to funding cuts. I implore you to reconsider the decision to cut our assistance.

I am a mother of five, wonderful children, all who attend Green Wood. We have been going there for almost three years now. My children love the daycare and have grown and learned so much with their help. Much more so than had I tried to teach them myself. They are incredibly smart for their ages and I attribute that to Vickie and her great staff. My two-year old can sing the alphabet song, and my 5-year old daughter is reading way beyond her age level. Had she gone to a Kindergarten in public school, I don't think she would have such a great beginning to her education.

Our decision to send the kids to GreenWood was mostly for the location. At the time, my husband and I were both working at McDonalds as managers. We had two toddlers and a newborn and were working opposite shifts to watch the kids. Needless to say, we never got time together with the kids, or with each other. Betty Jo would come through our drive thru in the morning on her way to work and order a diet coke. We got to talking about GreenWood Academy and how it might help our situation. The first few days cost us a few hundred dollars, until Vickie was able to help us apply for the scholarship assistance. Since then, we have been able to get jobs with good, set schedules and spend time with the kids together. No more 5 a.m. openings, or midnight closes that were such a strain on our kids and our sleep. I have great insurance and wonderful benefits through Walmart, and a great schedule. We now have two more boys, 18 months and 4 months old.

We cannot afford to live in the beautiful Gallatin Valley without both my husband and I working full-time. We have been blessed to receive over \$2000/month in assistance for daycare with our co-pay less than \$200.

Vickie and her staff have been a God-send and have helped us tremendously. Without the assistance that we receive, we would not be able to afford daycare and would have to quit working. We would not be able to afford our bills and would most likely end up moving in with relatives out of state. Our other options would be to stay and go on welfare and more government assistance. We are working toward getting debts paid off and saving for our own home. Eventually we would like to be able to not need Food Stamp assistance or daycare assistance. We are one of the few families on the threshold of all or none. We make just enough to get by, and then we get a raise at work which raises our co-pay for daycare and cuts our Food Stamps, by far more than the raise increases our income. Last year we ended up cutting our hours to not lose the assistance we had. We felt like we had been punished rather than rewarded for the hard work we had done.

There are many more families in the same situation as us. Montana is a beautiful state, but beauty has its price. We cannot afford to move out of state and would rather not leave the life and friends we have here. We ask you to please, please reconsider your decision to cut the funding for the childcare assistance program. Montana cannot afford to lose the great educational program that Greenwood Academy provides. I believe that without the assistance that Vickie receives for the families that attend, she would not be able to keep her establishment open. I haven't looked for any other daycare for my children, but I don't think there are any others in the valley that would have room for 5 more children.

Please take the time to listen to the working families of our state and not cut the daycare funding that helps them be able to live in this beautiful state.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Joanna Hill and Patrick Hill. The signature for Joanna Hill is on the left, and the signature for Patrick Hill is on the right. Both signatures are in cursive and appear to be written in black ink.

Joanna and Patrick Hill