

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is John Fitzgerald and am 16 years old and I'm from Boca Raton Florida, I am currently attending 20 peaks program for adolescent teenagers. I've currently been in a program for coming on 2 years. My life has been changed ever since I arrived. I got sent here in the summer of 2005. I arrived here not knowing what to expect. My parents got more than what they expected when they got there 16 year old kid back. Living at home I didn't have enough structure and my parents soon noticed it as I started to fall in school. I got into drugs to escape a life that I wouldn't call paradise My parents soon found out that it was best for me to go live in a program where more structure and attention would be provided, something they couldn't provide. My first summer in Montana was rough, dealing with feeling's and problems that I'd pushed away from my whole life until now. I struggled that summer knowing that home wasn't a healthy environment for me to be in.

My program director Paul Clark and many others have helped me out a lot to work through my struggles as a teenager. That summer also helped me come to grips with myself and find a higher power who I call God . I also found out that I'm addicted to drugs and that it is possible for me to have a positive relationship with my family again. The program I'm in today helps me grow with my family and keep my sobriety.

I'm not just here to talk about my life but the future of adolescent programs. Paul Clark hasn't only introduced me to a new life but to house bill 769. I was asked if I wanted to come

here today and talk about what I think about the house bill 769. I noticed some guideline's that I fully support the committee enforcing . As you know HB 769 has a 5 member board . Having a board of committee members to regulate and set standards for programs to work and build around for healthy and productive environment's I think is a good idea. And if it were up to me to keep the majority of the member's, program affiliated like in HB 769 they would be as they have been in the past two years. If some ones going to be setting the standards I think they should know how programs are operated and what needs to be looked at when setting the standards for programs like mine. So I think the board should stay the way it has been in the past. I also noticed that the board will require full back round checks on anyone working with the kids which I think should have happened along time ago. When getting sent here my parents thought it was a way of keeping me safe putting me in hands that they know could be trusted so yes anybody working or coming in contact with the kids I think should have back round checks and depending on what crime they have committed should be determined weather they can still be employed.

As one of the kids affected by these various bills I also think that the current board has been doing what they said they would do, and that is keeping the safety and well being of the children attending the program in mind. Based on the 5 different programs I attend school with I'm hoping that there won't be any over regulating when setting the standards for programs like the ones I see everyday in school and mine . I ask you this, why fix something if it's not broken? I fully support House Bill 769.

Thank you for your time Mr. Chairman and members of the board

John Fitzgerald