EXHIBIT 44
DATE 1-18-07
HB 2

January 5, 2007

Montana Congressmen
State Capitol Building
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Congressman,

Our daughter, Jamie Burnham is a very fortunate young woman to have a placement in the services of the Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP). At age 10 she was placed in a group home for children with autism. Over the years she has been in the care of many caregivers, most of whom are very dedicated and loving people.

Jamie is now 28, lives in an apartment with another individual with autism. Mark, the roommate, has autism and serious seizures. They will never be able to live independently and they require 24 hour staffing to meet their needs. It is increasingly difficult to find qualified staff persons to work with them. We all know the job market is an employee's market now. Whenever an employee can make comparable or better wage working in fast food than in direct care giving, the people in services of DDP suffer. In fast food the employee might make an error in someone's lunch order, but they don't have to deal with grand mall seizures, adult incontinence or dispensing drugs correctly. A huge responsibility lies with these positions and the paycheck does not begin to match the task.

Jamie may be a "special needs" individual, but she is capable of bonding and developing close relationships with her caregivers. Each time a staff person leaves, we witness a grieving process in Jamie. She has no understanding of their absence. Is she being rejected, or worse, did they die? It is heartbreaking for us to see our daughter go through this repeatedly. Let's remove the revolving door to her residence and keep those staff members that have undergone all the necessary training only to leave and seek employment elsewhere for a little more money.

I began by saying Jamie is fortunate, and she is. She is home with us every weekend. She camps with us, goes for walks, does puzzles and generally enriches our lives. Many of her peers do not have the involvement of family and their caregivers become surrogate family to them.

We are taking this opportunity to convey to you the importance of funding the Community Developmental Disability Services in the state of Montana. We are hearing that the original amount of $30 million asked for in the budget has already been cut back to $15 million. With the number of people in services and the many, many more who are on waiting lists for services, this is a devastating reduction in funding.

Please, please consider the importance of this expenditure. These are people....people who are not in control of their own lives and depend on other people like you to look out

for them. I live in fear for our daughter's welfare when we are no longer here to advocate for her. I hope the legislature of Montana will be there for her when we are not.

I appreciate your taking the time to listen to our position in this important matter. I hope there will be some significant changes in the allotment to maintain these important services.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

James Burnham

Etta Burnham

James & Etta Burnham