

*Testimony to Senate Education & Cultural Resource Committee**Opposing SB 123**January 10, 2007**Presented by Beth Emter, Clancy*

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, for the record my name is Beth Emter and I live in Clancy, MT. I am the parent of two children ages 4 and 2, and I am here today to voice my opposition to Senate Bill 123 for Full-Time Kindergarten.

This bill is a prime example of too much too soon. It places an unnecessary—and possibly even detrimental—burden on our children at an age when the transition to school should be a gradual one. For my kids, and others around the state, part-time kindergarten should remain an integral part of this process. This bill is simply a very expensive band-aid approach that lumps all students together without finding real solutions for those kids who need extra help.

This bill would also place unreasonable and unnecessary financial burdens on our public schools and our state budget, and for unproven results. While some studies on full-time kindergarten show positive results, there are others that have found that whatever positives come from full-time kindergarten are largely short-term. If this is true, why are we proposing doubling the costs of kindergarten programs and unnecessarily spending taxpayer dollars that could be spent in other, more beneficial ways?

This funding would be better spent focusing specifically on those children who are falling through the cracks. Why not consider fully funding teacher aides in the classroom to focus on kids who aren't getting what they need, and on funding early childhood preschools and after-school programs that focus on academics and ensuring that all students get the best start possible.

As a concerned parent and taxpayer, I feel that spending precious state resources on an unproven idea like full-time kindergarten is a bad one. I urge your "no" vote on Senate Bill 123. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Beth Emter