

EXHIBIT 35
DATE 1/27/09
HB 2

307 Woody Street, #J
Missoula, MT 59802

January 26, 2009

Dear Members of the Montana Legislature;

My name is Alice de Chelley; and I am a woman with a life long disability. In this letter, I would like to address the spend down issue.

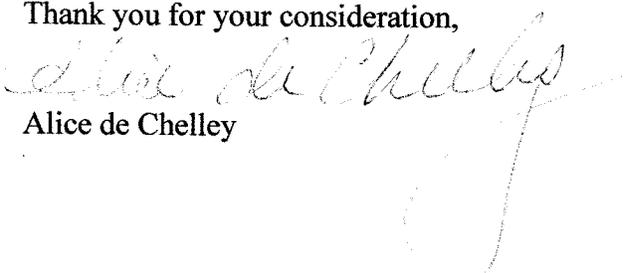
After graduating from high school, I could have immediately gotten on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as everyone around me was advising. However, I wanted to contribute and went to college instead, got a degree and worked for a number of years. In 2000, I had a nervous breakdown from exhaustion, trying to keep up with working a full time job and dealing with a kidney disease that creates great fatigue and serious bone pain.

At that time, I applied for and qualified for Social Security Disability. I am grateful for the income and for the Medicaid I am able to purchase with a monthly spend down. And recently, the amount of income I receive minus the spend down amount increased due to the good intentions of the Legislature. However, my net income is still lower than it would be had I gotten directly on to SSI without attempting to contribute to society. I feel that the current system penalizes those who have worked. The SSI payment is at \$674 and my income is \$645. I feel that this is unfair to those who have worked in the past. If I could work now, I certainly would be doing so instead of living in chronic poverty. I request that our income at least match SSI income and that we receive cost of living increases automatically.

Over the last 9 years, I have only received one cost of living increase, and I find that situation untenable. I do want to say I am grateful for the cost of living increase recently granted by the legislature, but I don't think it went far enough to create equity.

I sincerely hope that you consider raising the income level for those with a Medicaid spend down and providing for a much needed cost of living increase automatically.

Thank you for your consideration,


Alice de Chelley