

Jonathan Peart <jonathanp@eaglemount.us>

Fri, Feb 27, 2009 at 10:50 AM

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Cc: emarntzen@excite.com, shinlercabinetry@q.com, Mike Vinton <mikev@vintonlog.com>

Chairman Barkus and Members of the Fish and Game Senate Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 172 which is before your committee on Tuesday, March 3rd, 2009. I am unable to attend this committee hearing on HB 172 though I was able to attend and speak in support of the bill when it was before the House committee.

I am the Executive Director of Eagle Mount Billings. Eagle Mount Billings provides opportunities in recreation to enhance the lives of children and adults with disabilities. www.eaglemount.us

Eagle Mount provides group recreational activities in skiing, golf, biking, children's day camp, swimming, equestrian, social night and arts & crafts. We do not have a hunting program and HR 172 will provide hunting opportunities for developmental delayed individuals whose parents want to hand down and teach the tradition of hunting to their sons or daughters who cannot pass the written portion of the hunter safety course.

The bill provides adequate safety precautions and the amendments made in the House strengthened the safety aspects of the bill.

I speak in favor of this bill because it opens up new opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities. It has been our experience at Eagle Mount Billings over the past twenty years that what people with disabilities need more than anything is a chance...a chance to participate, learn and socialize with others. It is truly amazing the progress we see in those who participate in Eagle Mount programs. Sometimes individuals surprise even those of us working in this field with their growth and accomplishments when given a chance, teaching and support.

I respectfully ask the committee to give individuals with developmental disabilities the opportunity to experience hunting with their fathers or mothers and to allow them to be part of tradition of hunting that has been passed down from parents to children through the generations of Montanans. There are at least two children that this bill will directly affect who currently participate in Eagle Mount Billings' programs. Please follow the lead of the House which voted 99 - 1 in favor of the bill and vote yes on HB 172.

I was unable to email this to Senators Brenden and Shockley so I hope someone could make a copy of this message of support of this bill for them.

Thank you for your time in this matter. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 406-245-5422 in Billings.

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