Chairman Roberts and Committee members:

My name is Douglas C. Potter. I live at 6142 Matt Huff Rd. East Helena, Mt., with my wife Rhonda and son Charlie. We also have a daughter Jessica who lives in Ft. Falls Mt.

Our son Charlie has autism. He is high functioning, but is basically non-verbal. He is capable in many ways. We own a farm + ranch and Charlie likes to help with the work activities there.

Charlie is 22 years old and attended classes in the East Helena school system and then graduated in 2007 from Helena High School.

Through the years, we as a family have benefited greatly from Family Outreach, a support organization

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who help to train and educate families trying to cope with the challenges of raising a child with a disability. Our family life has been greatly enhanced by their continuing assistance and our sons successes are due to in a large part to them and the resource departments of our local school districts.

After graduation, Charlie was placed in a Vocational Rehab slot at Helena Industries, a sheltered workshop engaged in building Mini Barns and other wood shop products for all kinds of customers including the U.S. military. My wife and I felt that Charlie needed to be in a protected setting, and when he was offered

extended employment, we discussed it with Charlie and gratefully accepted it. Charlie has worked at Helena Industries for several years now, and enjoys his job. He comes home with a big smile on his face. The staff at Helena Industries have expanded his job skills and now he is working a part time janitorial job in addition to his regular duties. This enables Charlie to make a little more money which in turn lowers his need for SSI funds.

Helena Industries also provides classroom settings providing instruction to mitigate deficits in education and also life skills, this greatly helps enrich their lives.

Our son's disability is ongoing so will be his needs. He is

unable to voice his concerns, so therefore I speak on his behalf. On this great day of democratic participation in one of our country's greatest freedoms, exercising our 1st amendment rights, we as a family request your utmost attention to the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens, hoping that you realize that even though their words may be few their needs are great

thank you for your time
Douglas C. Potter