

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Collette Brownlow, the proud parent of Stuart.

I appreciate the time you are giving us today for hearing our testimonials.

The work being done by those who are serving individuals with developmental disabilities is not only saving the State of Montana dollars but more importantly it is allowing this sector of our population to become productive citizens.

Stuart, like many others are being served by Helena Industries. Stuart's job coach assists me with transportation. We have tried public transportation and it will not work with Stuart's varying schedule. It was because the public transportation would not fit with Stuart's schedule that it was discovered that the rides to and from work have been and continue to be excellent and very important counseling sessions. Sitting down with Stuart or others in a meeting situation is very difficult. He tends to shut down and simply agree to anything and everything said. But, by talking during the trips to and from work many problems and frustrations have been diffused. The job coach has the skills needed to recognize when problems are developing. He also serves as a liaison with Safeway staff.

I would like to share with you two incidents that illustrate the importance of the work being done by just one of the agencies assisting and teaching our people with developmental disabilities.

Recently, Stuart lost his father and was going through turmoil and did not know how to deal with his grief. His job coach was able to recognize his needs and help him work through it and stay focused on his job. He worked with the staff at Safeway's, who are always accommodating and willing to work things out.

It does not always have to be a tragedy that creates distractions. Just before going to China for Special Olympics the job coach's skills were needed many times to keep Stuart focused and then again once he returned with his gold medal.

Stuart very seldom calls in stating that he cannot come to work. In fact, a quote from his employer was "If Stuart calls in sick we know that he is

sick!" You could count on one hand the number of days he has called in sick during each of the 18 years he has been employed at Safeways and you would have fingers left over

As a parent and a friend of those with developmental disabilities, I plead with you to at the very minimum continue to maintain the funding for programs for those with developmental disabilities and remind you that by doing this you will be saving the State of Montana dollars and making a difference in many lives.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for letting me talk.

My name is Stuart Brownlow. I work at Safeways and have for 18 years.

I bag groceries and bring in carts.

~~If~~ Sometimes I am asked to do other jobs and then my job coach helps me.

My job coach helps to get me to work and home.

He is my friend . If I did not have a job coach I could lose my job.

Please do not cut the budget.

Thank you. Do you have any questions?