

EXHIBIT 26
DATE 2/3/2011
HB Etchart/Satre

2028 Le Grande Cannon Blvd.
Helena, MT 59601

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January 20, 2011

Dear Mr. Roberts and Committee Members :

My name is Paulette Etchart and I am writing to ask for your support of the Waiver Program and Personal Care Services administrated through DPHHS. These programs provide assistance so that people with disabilities are able to live semi-independent lives and not be relegated to the care of a nursing home or some other type of acute care facility.

I am the primary caretaker for my sister Nancy Etchart a brain cancer survivor who utilizes the services of this program. She lives in an apartment with assistance from the Waiver Program. If this program did not exist Nancy would be in a nursing home. The unfortunate people who are in a situation to use this program have suffered severe trauma or disease that have devastated their lives and the lives of their families. This program allows them to remain in their homes and the amount of security and comfort that it provides to them and their families is immeasurable. Nancy and our family are so thankful she has this opportunity. It has lifted her spirits, provided her dignity, and added positive benefits to her overall health care by letting her continue to live as an independent person rather than a patient in a high cost nursing home.

I strongly urge you to leave this program in place as it is. It does so much good, for so many who are unable to help themselves. The disabled have a place in our society and deserve to be participants in our community. It is important that we do not let the disabled be shunted to the side because they are not perfect. The disabled are not always well represented and often are deprived of basic compassion and rights because they are sometimes hard to interact with. One of the key tenets of our society is to take care of "the least among us". The Waiver program does that and by doing so demonstrates a terrific way to treat those far less fortunate than the typical citizen.

If the Waiver program is cut or ended Nancy's life will change. She is not economically in a position to pay for much of her care. She will be forced to go to an institution at age 52, that is funded by Medicaid anyway, and her life will change significantly....for her and our family it will be catastrophic.

I would be happy to personally meet with any of you to discuss this further and I greatly appreciate your positive consideration of this very important matter for my family and me.

Sincerely,



Paulette Etchart