EXHIBIT #2
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BILL SB 59

SB0059 Testimony

10 February 2011

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Helena, MT

Good ~~afternoon~~ morning ~~Mr.~~ Madam Chair Chairman & members of the committee. I'm Patty Dean [spell name], a Partner in the Field for the National Trust for Historic Preservation but today I am testifying as a public historian based upon more than 30 years' experience in museums in Montana, Arkansas & Minnesota.

I offer my whole-hearted support of SB0059 "to provide for a mural that honors the history of Montana women as community builders". I am keenly attuned to the vital need to study & make accessible to the public, the presence & stories of people who--because of gender, religion, or ethnicity--have long been "under the level of historical scrutiny."

Our understanding of Montana history is always evolving. In recent years, as historians & genealogists have interviewed their communities' women for family & local histories & sought out club & business records, diaries & journals for archives & library collections, new stories have emerged that further illuminate the Montana history we thought we knew.

In the excellent history, *Montana's State Capitol: The People's House* published by the Montana Historical Society Press in 2002, Professor Patricia M. Burnham recounts how the selection of images made 100 years ago to tell Montana's short Euro-American history in pictorial form reflected an understanding of our state's history *at that time.* In the very early 20th century, women's legacy as community builders in Montana history was not understood nor consequently valued. As we are learning to seek out other Montanans' newly-told stories, it is critical that we ensure that the People's House more fully portrays the *people's* story. Presently, this story is incomplete, characters, plots, & themes are missing. The creation & placement of a mural in the Capitol documenting how women have enriched every aspect of our culture would fill this void eloquently.

I'd like to close with a brief quote from the afterword of *Motherlode*, an anthology compiled & edited by Butte historians Ellen Crain & Janet Finn on the legacy of women's lives & labors in the Mining City:

"*With courage, grace & humor women have built & sustained community in good times & bad. They have persevered for the sake of individual, family & community survival & they have taught us the value of commitment for the long haul...Women have made the connection between personal struggles & public issues & between acts of love & acts of justice. They have stepped forward to serve their community & challenge those who would seek to silence them or render them invisible...In so doing, they have inspired future generations to take a risk, envision possibilities & make a difference. We are grateful for the opportunity to bear witness to these stories & to make them part of the public record.*"

We are all here today, you & I, to make a difference, that is only one of our links to these Montanans so deserving of recognition & commemoration. I urge you to pass SB0059 to ensure MT women's ~~their~~ legacy is rendered visible in the Capitol's visual public record. Thank you for your consideration.