EXHIBIT # 5
DATE 2-15-11
HB 491

HOUSE BILL 491

PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE ADMINISTRATION

Good ~~afternoon~~ morning. My name is Mike Cuffe from Eureka in Montana's northwest corner. I represent most of rural Lincoln County. I come today to present for the committee's consideration House Bill 491.

During my campaign I promised to support education without raising taxes, realizing funding reductions had to happen. Today I bring you a bill that will assist education at the college level while reducing the costs of providing that education.

House Bill 491 came about through Bill Johnston, assistant to the president at UM, who raised the notion that expensive lab equipment could be purchased through a co-op at greatly reduced cost. I said I would be happy to carry the bill as long as it did NOT divert purchase of general supplies away from Montana suppliers. I have been assured that all possible purchases are made at the closest level and through the low cost provider.

One quick disclaimer. I am happy to inform you that as editor of the Libby Western News many years ago I took photographs of Bill as a student, and by the time Bill graduated Libby High I was green end foreman at the plywood plant. He hired on to pull veneer from my green chain. Fast forward a couple decades--As UM Alumni director, Bill helped get me tickets and a seat on the last plane out of Missoula to National Championship Grizzly football games. Bill is a good man, and he comes from good stock. I believe what he says.

One time plywood maker Bill Johnston and others are here with more information, and I will sit down, reserving the right to close. Thank you for considering this bill.

IN CLOSING: This is a measure that literally impacts all taxpayers across the state as well as anyone who moves on to higher education. It should appeal both parties. It is good for the people of Montana. Please move it forward quickly.