

Exhibit No. 4Date 4-5-11Testimony for HB439 Senate Finance and Claims Committee April 5, 2011 Bill No. HB 439

Honorable Chairman Dave Lewis , Honorable members of the committee, for the record my name is Betty L. Babcock, I live at 1625 Highland, Helena, MT 59601. I am here to testify in favor of HB 439. I was first asked to appear on behalf of the Montana Historical Society (MHS) along with Attorney General Joe Mazurek at the 2005 Legislative session on HB540. Consequently I have been extremely interested in everything that concerns the MHS since that time. Some of you are new to the Legislature and the Senate and may also be new to Helena. I will be brief, but it is important that you hear a little of the societies early history. The MHS is the oldest society west of the Mississippi River. It was founded at the end of the Civil War by the First Territorial Legislature in 1865, even before Montana became a State. The first act was to provide the funds for it's existence, a sum of one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150) was appropriated. At one time it was housed in the Capitol basement. Because of overcrowding, the present building was built in 1951. The Sons and Daughters of the Montana Pioneers donated the land and the Veterans, at that time, contributed funds. There have been many ups and downs, but as the years go by our history grows by leaps and bounds and becomes more and more important to our citizens and especially to future generations. You may be surprised to know that all you say and do here is recorded on archival paper and is given to the Society for safe keeping. You are a very important part of our wonderful history. This bill will provide part of the needed funds to go ahead with the necessary expansion of the building.

The MHS has some of this nation's most remarkable collections. Most of its world-class artifacts and works of art remain in storage because the existing museum lacks sufficient exhibit space. There is the Charlie Russell Collection, a gift from Bill McKay; the Poindexter Collection of ninety-nine paintings of modern art donated by E. George Poindexter, who was a Montana native; and the Legacy in Bronze by Bob Scriver worth \$15 Million or more. We have beautiful artifacts depicting our Indian culture that are in storage. Our Native Americans deserve the use of an auditorium where they can perform their beautiful historical Pow-Wow dances similar to those done at the museum in Cody, Wyoming. Their culture must be preserved as required by our constitution (Article 10, Section 2) and could be displayed in our museum when we have more space. We must not betray those who have donated their valuable treasures hoping they will be displayed for the benefit of others so that future generations may learn from them.

This Bonding Bill will start us back on the road to success, making it possible for the Museum to

become a thriving viable business. Attendance will increase, thereby generating more fee revenue. There is no doubt tourists who come to visit our National Parks will also stop in Helena to visit our world class museum. This will add revenue for our hotels and restaurants along the way, helping our economy. But more importantly, beside the jobs it will create in constructing the building, our students and others will benefit from the history and education that it will provide. In one year over 18,000 students visited our museum from across the state and they were from every county. It is a very important research resource for all Montana citizens and others. The MHS provided technical advice and assistance to 50 institutions and provided traveling exhibits to 17 communities. This is not just a project for Helena, it will serve as the flag ship and be a source of benefit for the museums throughout the state. A comprehensive, standard history textbook was published in 2008 , which allows our children to learn Montana history from a tested curriculum, and teachers have a professional resource at their disposal. Another educational resource that has been made available are the footlockers that over 400,000 school children have used in the past 20 years.

When the paper published the possibility that the MHS be moved to Butte, I received a 190 or more e-mails stating the importance of keeping the Museum in the Capital City. I attend some meetings urging the care and safety of our Montana History. We now have the designated location on the corner of Sixth and Roberts. The former State Senator, a true Montanan, Mike Cooney, as Director is at the helm with a goal and a plan in place. We realize that a fund raising campaign from the private sector will be important and necessary. We must by all means provide for the love and care of our valuable history. You all have a difficult job for you are the custodians of this very important vital Montana Institution. We must continually care for our precious history or it may be lost forever or go to other states. I sincerely thank you for your help and your time, and will leave you with this comment. "One of the greatest gifts you can give to future generations is to inspire them with the knowledge of their own history and heritage."

I urge you to please give HB439 a favorable Vote.

Many thanks to you Mr. Chairmen and also to all the members of this committee. 1-406-442-5611