

Exhibit No. 3Date 4-7-11Bill No. HB 423

HOUSE BILL 423 – April 7, 2011

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

For the record I am Ellen Simpson of Clancy, Montana, and am testifying as a private citizen on my own behalf. While I have been part of the legislative process for 30 plus years, I am not representing anyone today as a paid lobbyist.

I really didn't think any issue would get me into the Capitol to testify this session. But after realizing how egregious House Bill 423 truly is, I felt compelled to be here to point out a few of the reasons why you should vote against this gambling expansion bill being presented under the guise of helping "unfortunate and disabled persons" as stated on page 4, lines 5 and 6.

With all due respect, please be very clear and very aware – HB 423 is not a social services funding mechanism. It is a gambling bill. HB 423 is a bill to dramatically expand gambling in Montana by legalizing blackjack or 21 as it is commonly called. Frankly, this bill should have been treated as such in the House and should have been scrutinized in House Judiciary or Business and Industry where gambling bills are normally heard because its passage would mean a dramatic policy change that should not rest solely with the Finance and Claims Committee.

With that said, its fate now rests with you, so here are three points for you to consider.

First Point: For those of you who recognize HB 423 for what it is – a major expansion of gambling – that's reason enough for you to vote no if you dislike the backdoor approach being used to legalize blackjack, which is the main thing this bill does and why it should have been vetted in Judiciary or Business and Industry for its major policy ramifications. HB 423 is a gigantic policy change that has been discussed and rejected by Legislatures for the past 20 plus years. The reason for previous rejection is because blackjack moves the State of Montana from

Class I gambling – think bingo and video machines - to Class III gambling activities referred to as casino-style gambling. And, I don't mean the Main Street Mom and Pop bar with a few machines that have a casino sign in the window. What I mean is the Nevada style casino complete with slot machines, craps tables, blackjack and roulette. Once one of those types of gambling is legalized, the others will quickly follow. Be aware that polls indicate Montanans have long expressed a negative attitude toward that type of activity and for good reason because we have said we don't want Flathead Lake to look like Lake Tahoe nor do we want quaint, small towns like Red Lodge to look like Deadwood, South Dakota or Jackpot, Nevada.

Second Point: For those of you who dislike earmarking funds in special revenue accounts thus removing the Legislature's ability to disburse collected monies as you see fit, that's reason enough for you to vote no. You, as legislators, would have no say in the disbursement of the funds collected under this bill.

Third Point: For those of you who are offended with the idea of paying for any kind of social services with gambling money, there's your reason to vote no. Personally, I find it reprehensible to attach to gambling activities the kind of funding of necessary services for the least able among us, including alleged suicide prevention. There are numerous documented cases of Montanans committing suicide because of gambling addiction. Any treatment professional can tell you of specific cases of child abuse and neglect caused by the gambling addiction that can go with it. Law enforcement folks can relate stories of domestic abuse and the need for shelters because of out-of-control gambling in families and the violence that can be caused. It is an especially cruel twist to use those specific needs as a ruse to gain passage of a major gambling expansion.

So, before casting your vote, please, I ask you to think about the major policy change this means in the arena of gambling at large in the State of Montana. This is not a simple vote on some funding that will show up again in two years. This will open the floodgates of a major gambling expansion under a not-even thinly disguised way to pay for a few social services. It really is disgusting and disingenuous.

Please vote no on House Bill 423. Thank you for your time and attention.