



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

435 RYMAN MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802-4297

January 7, 2011

The Honorable Senator Terry Murphy, Chair  
Members of the Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee  
Montana Senate  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 4

DATE: 1/10/2011

BILL NO. SB 25

Sent via email

Chairman Murphy and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The City of Missoula is expressing support for SB 25, "provide monitoring of childhood body mass index trends."

The taxpayers of the City of Missoula have a huge investment in our parks, trails, and other recreational infrastructure. These opportunities for active living are one of the most important resources we can offer to curb and further prevent the epidemic of obesity that is affecting our nation's children. Investments like this are in place across the state. However, one key element is missing - Montana does not have a measure of how our children are faring in this epidemic. Senator Kaufmann's SB 25 would provide the basic information necessary to monitor our state's progress and our children's health.

Missoula monitors body mass index among third graders. A simple calculation is made when height and weight measures are taken in our schools. Collaborative efforts between our local health department and school districts achieved a 92% participation rate via annual monitoring. Children's parents can opt out if they prefer and no child's name accompanies the aggregate data.

We've learned that monitoring children's body mass index as a public health indicator is doable and useful. We urge your support of SB 25, and thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

John Engen  
Mayor

cc: Alec Hansen, Montana League of Cities and Towns  
John MacDonald, Gallatin Public Affairs  
Ellen Leahy, Director, Missoula City-County Health Department