EXHIBIT 4
DATE 1/25/2013
HB 178

January 25, 2013

Madam Chair, members of the committee, for the record, my name is Jamie Sekerak - - that's S E K E R A K. I am a parent of one 17 year old son currently attending Helena High School, and one 14 year old daughter, currently attending Montana City School. I was asked by my son's teacher to come before you today in support of House Bill 178. Although I am not typically comfortable in such situations, I felt it was worth the time, effort, and frankly, nervousness, in order to urge the passing of this bill concerning the very important issue of increasing state Traffic Education funding.

I am certain there is someone here today that is much more qualified than I, to state statistics showing that, "the teens of parents who choose traffic/driver education for their teen have fewer crashes and citations than teens of parents who elect not to enroll their teen in traffic education" (NHTSA OREGON GDL Study 2007). Instead, I will give you my thoughts in support of this bill from the perspective of a parent that *has* chosen to give my son the benefit of Driver's Education, and *will* do the same for my daughter within the upcoming year.

Perhaps the key word in the quote I just stated is, "CHOOSE." It is unlikely that anyone would argue that this program surely increases the successful and safer driving skills of our children. I believe most parents think their children should take the class. The problem lies with ability for funding. The schools lack it, and often times, so do the parents. Despite the belief that all teen drivers should have the benefit of this potentially life-saving training, many cannot afford it. Furthermore, lack of school funding results in that cost being passed on to the parent's pocketbook, making it even less likely the child can take the class. In this scenario, we all lose. Dedicated teachers are willing to give their time, schools are willing to carry much financial burden, parents want optimal safety for their children, but without the proper funding, we cannot "CHOOSE," what we know is best.

I am fortunate that our schools have offered driver's education despite funding cuts and that I am able to cover my part of the cost. It has been worth every penny and has given me much more confidence in my son's abilities as a safe driver. But I do know so many parents that truly cannot pay for this class, despite seeing the need for it. Unfortunately, they send their child out the door without the benefit of assurance in their driving abilities. This affects everyone using the roads and sidewalks every day.

If you have children of driving age, you know the conflicting feelings that come with that first driver's license: Relief that he/she can get themselves to all of the many places you used to have to make time to drive them to, but also the anxiety and fear of a traffic accident; one that may very well take the life of your precious child, or someone else's. Anything that can be done to prevent those 10 second, life-altering, mistakes, is surely warranted and necessary. Gratefully, I do not have a riveting and compelling story to share with you about a tragic event that would persuade you to support this bill. My son has an absolutely perfect driving record, perhaps, maybe even likely, due to the fact that we were able to CHOOSE driver's education for him. We must give this choice to all parents of teen drivers. It seems to me imperative that you give a resounding, "Yes," in support of House Bill 178.

Thank you.

Jamie Sekerak

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