

Chairman Ehli – Members of the Committee,

EXHIBIT 10
DATE 1/25/13
HB _____

My Name is Diane Reidelbach (spell). I am the Business Manager at Job Connection, Inc. located in Billings, MT.

- High cost of doing business:

For a small company our health care costs are now triple the amount used to calculate our state DD rates. Our transportation costs increase every year, the state and federal government requires training for our staff as a 'quality assurance', the state requires us to have a private firm conduct an audit of our company - every year, the states policies and rules fill binders and change frequently, this necessitates the need for more management. The states "Contract" with us is always requiring more documentation, issuing more deadlines, requiring more training and establishing more oversight. Those additional costs and requirements did not stop but the rates were frozen.

- Our losses and savings

We are sustaining substantial losses in our Supported Living program. In 2011, our Supported Employment service according to your additional state audit showed a 10% loss. We have trimmed our monthly liability by purchasing a building and generating income from a small portion of it with leases, our direct support staff is underpaid. We have tried to fundraise, we are not very good at it and frankly we are not in that business. We need an increase in the rates not to prosper – but to survive.

- Our business

Our business at Job Connection is integrating persons with disabilities into our community. We teamed up with the state to start supported employment in Montana 31 years ago, to help find and train jobs for our clients, to become partners with Billings employers, to keep our folks successful in work. They have made connections and created relationships in our community, they have studied and practiced and got their driver's license, they have gotten their own apartments. Our clients have become **taxpayers**.

- Suggestion

So finally a suggestion – a line item addition to House Bill 2 to include additional dollars to promote employment for persons with developmental disabilities. The unemployment rate for the state of Montana is around 6%. The rate of

unemployment for persons with disabilities is 80%. Most young adults with disabilities coming out of high school say they “expect to find a job”. In reality most do not or if they do it doesn’t last. They then sit at home and wait for services that do not come. The screening system for DD services is crisis driven. At the point when these young adults become a crisis situation they may or may not get services.

M is a 23 year old woman who found a job out of high school as a beekeeper assistant. She lasted in the job for under 3 months. Her coworkers ridiculed and made fun of her. She quit. She has been hopping between friends apartments and her dads house for the last five years, she has been misguided by friends who encouraged her to steal items from a local store. She now has a record. Those same friends used her name on their utility bill. They ruined her credit without her knowing. In July – 5 years out of high school, she was screened into services because she was homeless and was at risk of re-offending and going to jail. Her cost plan is more than twice the size of what it could have been if we or another provider could have served her early on when she decided she wanted to work. Now she has bad credit, a record and is essentially - homeless.

A pilot program in Washington state had a DD supported employment provider work with students for 2 years before graduation with transition to work training as well as job development and job training. Students who did not participate had a 6% rate of employment after graduation and the students who received SE serves have over a 70% rate of employment.

Supported Employment makes good business sense. Less crisis!

An average Supported Employment cost plan for this would be approx \$8400 per year. Allocating dollars for 20 persons per year and a rate increase would be a step in a positive direction.

Thank you