

17255 Remount Rd.  
Huson. MT 59846

February 19, 2013

Montana Legislative Committee  
Helena. MT

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I, Dylan Rincker, am an in-home family therapist working with low-income families in Missoula County. I have been employed in this position for nearly 3 ½ years with Western Montana Mental Health Center. I have worked with this population of children and families since 2004.

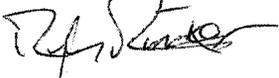
It has been my experience that the best interest of the child often is superseded by the wishes of the parent. This dilemma seems to be a result of drawing attorneys from the same office or firm. Typically this is done through the Office of Public Defenders or the same pool of lawyers regularly outsourced by the OPD.

I feel the clinical opinions of the child's treatment team are often not taken into full account by what presents as an enmeshed legal system that does not differentiate between the distinctly different needs of the child and those of the parents. I recently had an attorney for one of my child client's reverse her endorsement of placement and custody after she spoke with the parent's lawyer. In this situation the opinion of one lawyer invalidated the consensus opinion of five mental health professionals.

Our young clients and their parents each deserve an independent legal voice insulated from the influence of unchallenged alliances among attorneys. I believe HB 504 will provide this result.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,



Dylan Rincker, MSW  
Family Therapist  
Western Montana Mental Health Center  
Missoula Montana