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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:

My name is Lisa Scates and I work for the Department of Revenue but I am here representing myself as a resident of Helena in support of SB110. My previous experience includes 21 years in the public safety and law enforcement fields. Specifically with eight years as a Senior Crime Prevention Officer.

Crime prevention programs that I have been responsible for include Neighborhood and Business Watch, burglary, robbery and shoplifting prevention, identity theft, personal safety and CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.) These are extremely effective programs and provide positive results. In years of working with these programs I have seen crime waves disappear, crime rates drop and communities become safer.

Implementing crime prevention efforts provides an opportunity for residents to take an active role in keeping their communities safe. We as human beings are reactive in nature. We typically only respond to a problem after it happens. Crime prevention efforts focus on teaching people to be proactive to keep the problem from happening in the first place.

The crime prevention philosophy uses what we call the Crime Prevention Triangle. There are three sides to the triangle: the ability to commit a crime, the desire to commit a crime and the opportunity to commit a crime. We can only control the opportunity to commit a crime. That's what crime prevention efforts focus on.

Through crime prevention programs residents can be empowered to actively participate in their communities. It's not about being vigilantes, it's about learning how to become aware of your surroundings. In today's world people are busy and get into routines that cause them to be less aware of what's going on around them and they tend to keep to themselves and not always participate in their communities. Crime prevention programs help to bridge the connection that we have lost over the years. They also teach us how to be aware of our surroundings again.

We as residents cannot expect law enforcement to be responsible for taking care of everything. We need to have personal responsibility in our daily lives to not be careless or unaware. But, we need to be shown how to do this and that's where crime prevention programs come in.

Think about your own lives. Think about the routine you are in everyday. Take some time later today, maybe on your way home, to pay attention to what is going on around you. When you're sitting at a stop light in your car, look at the person in the car next to you. What are they doing? Are they aware? Probably not. Next time you walk down the street see how many people that you pass actually acknowledge you. Do they make eye contact with you? These are the types of things that help to make us victims, lack of awareness. Become aware, you remove the opportunity for crime to occur.

I think that we can all agree that less crime of all sorts is a good thing. Let's stop it before it occurs. I urge you to support SB110.

Thank you. I will be available later to answer any questions you might have.