

EXHIBIT NO. 5DATE: 2/8/13BILL NO. SB 254

February 6, 2013

House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Safety

Dear Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Bill 254.

I am the limited guardian of my twin brother, George Herak, who is developmentally disabled and who was institutionalized when he was 5 years old. Between the ages of 5-58 George was shuttled between Warm Springs and MDC. Seven years ago George became eligible for community services.

My family worked closely with MDC and had a good relationship with the direct care and medical staff at MDC and we were very concerned that his unique medical, social and psychiatric needs would not be addressed in the community in a group home setting.

However, since George moved out of MDC and into a small group home run by AWARE in Butte, Montana, we have been delighted with the care and attention he has received. The medical care, community services, recreational outings and first rate direct care he has received has been excellent. The small group home—four men living together, as opposed to the 11 person home he lived in at MDC has given him personal space, one-on-one attention that he had never before received. I believe that the care and attention George has received in his group home have given him a higher quality of life and a sense of peace and dignity that he deserves and had never before received.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 254.

Sincerely,

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