

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 2-6-15
HB 321

Montana League of Women Voters Testimony Opposing HB321
Before the House Education Committee
Friday, February 6, 2015

Madam Chairperson, Members of the Committee:

For the record I am Dr. Claudette Morton of Helena, representing the Montana League of Women Voters. We are opposed to HB321 because we believe in the existing structure which governs the public school system of the state. That system sets up the Board of Public Education in Article X of the Montana Constitution. The Board has the responsibility to "supervise the system," and in the landmark school funding lawsuit of 1989, it was further clarified that the Accreditation Standards that the Board develops are the floor on which the basic system of public education is built. In the Constitution, the Legislature is tasked with funding the state's share of the public school system. There is nothing in the Constitution to allow the Legislature to pass laws directing the Board to do anything. Therefore, we ask the committee to oppose HB321 because it makes an erroneous case for usurping the Board of Public Education's Constitutional duties.

Thank you.