

March 30, 2015

Dear Members of House Education Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Montana Organizing Project, a statewide organization of faith, labor, and community groups advocating for policies that create a fair and just economy in Montana. One of our key priorities is making higher education more affordable and reducing student debt for Montana workers.

Through SB 328, Montana will help create and encourage seeded savings accounts for higher education in an effort to reduce the debt load for students. The current average of student debt for Montana graduates is \$24,475, impacting 64% of Montana graduates. This creates a strain on Montana's economy with workers saddled with crippling debt, impacting their ability to be contributing members to Montana's economy.

Research has shown that higher education savings accounts help provide a financial edge for students, setting them up for a more prosperous future. Let's do what we can to help workers get ahead and make Montana a leader in finding solutions for student debt.

Please provide a do concur recommendation for SB 328.

Sincerely,

Sheena Rice  
Montana Organizing Project  
[sheena@montanaorganizingproject.org](mailto:sheena@montanaorganizingproject.org)  
406-490-9777



**Community. Faith. Labor. Montana's Movement**

406-534-9532

[info@montanaorganizingproject.org](mailto:info@montanaorganizingproject.org)

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