



February 16, 2015

Re: HB 468 - Revising laws on period of commitment or treatment of developmentally disabled

Dear Chairman Wittich and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

Montana's Centers for Independent Living are submitting this testimony in support of HB 468 to specify the maximum period of time for which a person can be committed or for which a community treatment plan may be imposed.

We feel that is bill is important due to the shameful history this country has when it comes to warehousing individuals with developmental disabilities and because of the slow rate at which individuals seem to transition out of the Montana Development Center back into the community. When individuals are forced to remain in an institution for extended periods of time they lose all of the community supports they may have had at the time of their commitment, which in turn requires them to remain institutionalized even longer. This creates a vicious cycle where many individuals are being kept in institutions far longer than they need to be and there is really no motivation or due diligence to get individuals stabilized and back out into their communities.

HB 468 is needed to ensure that the Montana Development Center functions more as a crisis stabilization facility with the goal of returning people back to their communities once they are stabilized rather than warehousing them for far longer than they need to be.

Please support HB 468.

Respectfully,

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