



PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 4

Date 2/16/2015

Bill No. SB 206

YWCA of Great Falls
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To: Senator Fred Thomas, Chair
Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee
From: Aart Dolman, Great Falls YWCA Legislative Advocate 
Date: February 16, 2015
Re: SB 206

Dear Senator Thomas and Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee Members:

The YWCA organization operates the Mercy Home in Cascade County, and it is the only shelter for battered women and children in Montana. In fact, it is the only non-governmental institution that offers this type of shelter in our state of Montana, and its residents have a secure shelter in a confidential location while they recover from traumatic family experiences.

In addition, Mercy Home serves three meals a day to its residents, legal advocacy for victims and their families seeking Orders of Protection, life skills classes on a wide variety of topics such as cooking, resume building, etc. They also receive crisis support and referrals to licensed counselors.

During the last few years families seeking shelter has drastically increased; in fact, its demand for shelter has doubled from its previous year.

The Great Falls YWCA Board of Directors stands in opposition to SB 206 for this legislation seeks to limit food purchases made with SNAP benefits to those allowable in the WIC program.

The Directors have determined that SB 206 limits our Mercy Home residents in their ability to get on their feet and become self-sustaining in their difficult challenge for recovery from spouse abuse and family violence.