

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Rudolf Tankink.

HB200, sponsored by Randy Pinocci is some that that is long overdue for Montana. Drug testing of welfare recipients is sound, sensible, and constitutional. There is rampant drug use all around us. Taxpayers' dollars need to be protected and if you have anyone that is actually abusing the system, such as that, they don't need to be there. They need to actually get themselves cleaned up and get back into the workforce.

Drug testing for welfare has been a debate since Congress overhauled welfare in 1996.

Random testing would accomplish two vital goals: 1) help those recipients with drug problems conquer them by identifying the problem; offering treatment, and not paying them until they get help; and 2) not waste precious taxpayer dollars by allowing welfare recipients to purchase drugs.

Critics have argued that mandatory drug testing is an unfair attack on the poor, but the most compelling reason to require it is to truly help those who are affected. Millions of private employers require their employees to be randomly tested for drugs in order for them to work to receive their paycheck. When I worked for Montana Power Company, I was subject to take random drug test at any time of the week.

Another aspect or side effect is the safety and long-term well-being of the children and families of those welfare recipients. Numerous states have shown that the incidence of controlled substance abuse is higher among welfare recipients than in the population as a whole; and that drug abuse by parents contributes to child abuse and neglect.

In 2014, at least 18 states introduced proposals or had carry over bills that would require drug screening or testing for public assistance applicants of recipients. America is facing a national debt of more than \$18 trillion. We simply can't afford for government agencies to be careless in how they spend our tax dollars. With potentially billions of dollars of welfare funds ending up in the wrong places or being spent on illegal drugs, the least we can do is make sure that the money is going where it's actually supposed to go.

No one doubts that many of our fellow Americans are facing some incredible challenges. With any economy on life support, debt at crisis levels, and staggering number of unemployed, we must all collectively do a better job of helping our neighbors in need and being good stewards with limited means. Common-sense welfare reform, including drug testing for recipients is a vital step in the right direction.

Drug testing of welfare recipients is sound and sensible public policy – and far from being an unreasonable or unconstitutional invasion of privacy. Please support HB200.

Thank you,

Rudolf Tankink
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