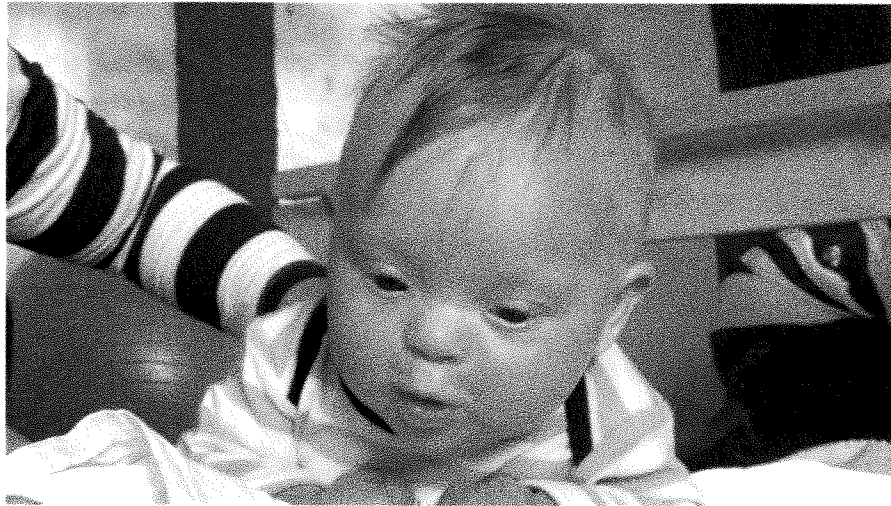


Governor Steve Bullock and State Legislators: Do not eliminate services to children with special needs in Montana.



Legislative Finance Committee
Oct. 4, 2017
Exhibit 18

The State of Montana has proposed to eliminate services for children with special needs in Montana. This petition is requesting legislators and Governor Bullock to not cut Part C (children 0-3) and Family Education and Support Services (children 3-21). These services are vital to Montana families, children, and the future of the state. There is no question that the more support received in youth directly impacts the level of support a person needs throughout their adult life. We were shocked to hear that an elimination of this magnitude was even being proposed.

Here are some statistics:

~67% of children who receive early intervention services do not receive special education. Special Education costs per student are approximately an additional \$7900 per student per year. Early intervention works and saves significant money in the long term.

~Over 2000 children in Montana receive these services every year.

~Montana was one of the first states in the nation to adopt early intervention services through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), back in 1986. If these services are eliminated, we will be the only state in the nation to not provide them.

Montana has provided Part C services successfully since 1986.

~Montana has provided Family Education and Support Services (FES) successfully since 1977. FES is a federal program funded by \$4,000,000 federal funds to provide services to children with special needs who have not received a waiver slot. The state contributes only \$500,000 for the critical services. The proposal to save state funds which cover 20% of FES and refuse the 80% federal allocation is ludicrous.

We are requesting that the executive and legislative branches work together to address the need to continue funding for Montana children and families.