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Unanimous Support for SB 4 in Montana Legislature – Disability Rights Montana Urges Governor’s Signature

HELENA, MT – In a remarkable display of unity, the Montana Legislature has voted unanimously to pass Senate Bill 4 (SB 4), a critical piece of legislation designed to improve Montana’s mental health system and the lives of individuals with disabilities at the Montana State Hospital. Disability Rights Montana applauds the legislators for their commitment to this issue and urges Governor Gianforte to sign SB 4 into law.

As the bill now sits on the Governor's desk, Disability Rights Montana encourages all Montana residents to write to the Governor’s office, expressing their support for SB 4. This bill would require the sharing of reports of abuse and neglect at Montana State Hospital to Montana’s designated Protection and Advocacy System (Disability Rights Montana). By standing together, we can emphasize the importance of this legislation and ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in our communities are being cared for, treated, and respected.

The Montana State Hospital has been facing deplorable conditions for some time now, with its facilities falling far short of what one would expect from a modern healthcare institution. Patients and staff alike have been subjected to an environment that is not only inhospitable but detrimental to the well-being and recovery of the individuals housed within its walls. “When envisioning a hospital, one typically imagines a clean, well-maintained space where patients receive the highest standard of care. The Montana State Hospital has deviated significantly with its crumbling infrastructure, inadequate resources, substandard care and unsanitary conditions”, says Bernadette Franks-Ongoy, Executive Director of Disability Rights Montana. “It is imperative that we address these issues to ensure the health and safety of all those who rely on the Montana State Hospital as part of the continuum of care for mental health services in our state.”

Franks-Ongoy continues, “our democratic process is built on the foundation of representative government, and the unanimous passage of SB 4 showcases that our elected officials have heard the people’s call for action. Now, it is time for the Governor to recognize the clear message from the people of Montana and honor the legislative process by signing this bill into law.”
We kindly and humbly ask for every Montanans support in this urgent matter. The passage of SB 4 will provide transparency and significantly improve the lives of individuals with disabilities at the Montana State Hospital, and the Governor's signature serves as a testament to Montana's commitment to its citizens.

Please join us in our efforts by sending a web message or making a phone call to the Governor's office, expressing your support for SB 4.

Send a message at:  
https://governor.mt.gov/Contact/

Call the Governor’s office at:  
855-318-1330 (toll free)  
406-444-3111

Thank you for your support, and let's make a positive difference for individuals with disabilities in our great state of Montana.

About the organization

Disability Rights Montana is the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program for Montana, protecting and advocating for the civil, legal, and human rights of persons with disabilities of all ages and across Montana. DRM has the authority to monitor and investigate the provision of services for people with disabilities anywhere in the State. This includes schools, hospitals, prisons, and jails. People with disabilities have a right to be treated equally, with dignity and respect, and should never have to experience any mistreatment, exploitation, abuse, or neglect.

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