



Education and Local Government Interim Committee

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60th Montana Legislature

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July 16, 2008

Stephen Barrett, Chairman
Montana Board of Regents
4343 Sourdough Road
Bozeman, MT 59715-6628

Dear Regent Barrett:

Re: Legislative recommendation for additional dental slots in 2011 biennium budget

At the meeting of the Education and Local Government interim committee on June 13, 2008, the committee voted unanimously to support the final recommendation of the House Joint Resolution 22 (HJR 22) Dental Study Working Group, including the recommendation that the professional student exchange program student slots for dental students be expanded by 5.0 slots per year starting with the 2011 biennium.

The Committee recognizes the fiscal impact of these additional slots is projected to be \$341,000 general fund money during the 2011 biennium, but that the HJR 22 report indicates that these five additional slots have the potential to bring additional dentists back to Montana to practice across the state. In fact, according to the current return rate data for Montana students participating in the professional student exchange programs, these additional slots could result in two additional dentists per year returning to Montana to practice their profession.

Therefore, the Committee would urge the Montana Board of Regents include in their 2011 biennium budget request the expansion of these 5.0 additional dental student slots that would be funded by a state general fund appropriation.

Should you have any questions about this matter, please feel free to contact me. I appreciate your consideration of this recommendation by the Education and Local Government interim committee.

Very truly yours,

Senator Rick Laible
Committee Chair

cc: Governor Brian Schweitzer
Commissioner Sheila Stearns
Senator Bob Hawks, HJR 22 Working Group Chair