



CONNECT. ADVOCATE. GROW.

March 8, 2018

Paige Spalding
Montanans for the Six Mill
P.O. Box 1461
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Ms. Spalding,

Representing our 1,300 business members, who employ over 50,000 people, the Billings Chamber of Commerce and its board of directors would like to voice its support for the proposed 6-mill Higher Education Levy vote in November. We acknowledge the proposed 6-mill Levy vote is not a new tax on property owners, but a mandated reauthorization of a very successful funding measure in place since 1948. Because the money raised is appropriated to educational programs rather than building construction, we are confident that money will help students and ultimately our businesses.

Funding our higher education programs is integral to ensuring we have a highly skilled workforce. With access to a highly skilled pool of workers, our businesses can find the right employees to fill job openings. As Billings faces a shortage of more than 30,000 workers in the next 10 years, developing and attracting the next generation of workforce is critical to our business community.

We also support our university system campus, Montana State University Billings. With more than 140 businesses that employ MSU Billings graduates and \$86 million of economic impact, Yellowstone County garners significant benefits from our university. MSU Billings offers excellent programs, producing research patents and our next generation of physicians, pharmacists, and healthcare workers necessary to our healthcare industry.

For the benefit of Billings businesses, the Billings Chamber of Commerce supports reauthorization of the 6-mill Higher Education Levy.

Sincerely,

John Brewer
President/CEO
Billings Chamber of Commerce

Kris Carpenter
Chair of Board of Directors
Billings Chamber of Commerce

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