

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

Steve Bullock
GOVERNOR



Mike Cooney
LT. GOVERNOR

December 13, 2016

Dear Educators and School Administrators:

The Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) Juvenile Justice Program and I invite you and your students to participate in **Montana's 10th Annual Do the Write Thing Challenge**.

This **Challenge** is a violence prevention program that provides middle school students an opportunity to examine the impacts of youth violence in their homes, schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Students are invited to take a stand against violence in their schools and communities and are encouraged to make a commitment to do something to address the culture of violence.

Since 2008, Montana has participated in the National Challenge with more than 1,000 middle school students submitting thought-provoking, insightful essays and poems. In the Spring of 2017, state finalists for the **Challenge** will gather in Helena for a celebration of their work. I will have the opportunity to visit with these young leaders and hear their important stories. Montana's **Do the Write Thing** committee will select one boy and one girl to represent Montana as our ambassadors and travel to Washington, D.C. in July 2017, with a parent and the sponsoring teacher, to attend a four-day gathering of other ambassadors. Students will attend workshops, visit Capitol Hill, and read their essays aloud at the Library of Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court. Every year a leather-bound book containing the ambassadors' writings is presented to the Library of Congress for archival.

We encourage teachers to incorporate the **Challenge** into their classroom curriculum by:

- English: Using as an essay or poetry-writing assignment;
- Health: Discussing personal safety and well-being of others;
- Civics: Conducting an exercise on personal and civic responsibility;
- History: Using an historical perspective to examine youth violence.

The deadline for entries is February 17, 2017. In the coming week you will receive a more detailed letter, lesson plans, instructions, and course materials from the MBCC Juvenile Justice Specialist, Shawn Clark. If you have questions, you are welcome to reach out to Mr. Clark directly at sdclark@mt.gov or 406-444-2056. I encourage you to participate in the 10th Annual *Do The Write Thing Challenge* and, together, we can stop the culture of violence in our country through writing, conversation, and self-reflection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Bullock".

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor