

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

October 29, 2021

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 15th Annual Do the *Write* Thing Challenge**.

The **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 speak out against violence in their schools and communities and to become involved in efforts designed to combat youth violence and provide a safe, secure environment for all Montanans.

Since 2008, Montana has participated in the National Challenge with more than 2,000 middle school students submitting thought-provoking, insightful essays and poems. In the Spring of 2022, state finalists for the **Challenge** will gather in Helena for a celebration of their work. We 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 student national ambassadors who, with a parent and the sponsoring teacher, will attend a four-day gathering of other ambassadors in Washington, D.C. in July 2022. Students will attend workshops, visit Capitol Hill, and read their essays aloud at the Library of Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court. A leather-bound book containing the ambassadors' writings will be presented to the Library of Congress for archival.

We encourage educators to incorporate the **Challenge** into their classroom curriculum with:

- an essay or poetry-writing assignment;
- an exercise on personal and civic responsibility;
- discussing personal safety and well-being of others; and/or
- using historical and cultural perspectives to examine youth violence.

The deadline for entries is February 1, 2022. In the coming weeks you will receive a more detailed letter, lesson plans, instructions, and course materials from the MBCC Juvenile Justice Specialist, Rachel Gemar who may be reached at Rachel.Gemar@mt.gov or 406-444-2056. I encourage you to participate in the annual **Do The *Write* Thing Challenge**. Together, we can alleviate violence in our communities through discussion and introspection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Gianforte".

Greg Gianforte
Governor