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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Montana State Legislature.

American youths desire to serve their country. While Boy Scouts and JROTC units provide the youth of America with leadership training, Civil Air Patrol allows students over the age of twelve to give something back to their community. From varies community service activities, search and rescue, and disaster relief CAP allows young adults to serve. As a cadet, I served as Cadet Commander of Big Sky Squadron located in the Gallatin Valley, Vice Chairman of the Montana Wing Cadet Advisory Council, Representative on the Rocky Mountain Region Advisory Council, and attended Cadet Officer School located at the Air and War College at Maxwell AFB in Alabama. However, some of my most memorable stories come from my training in search and rescue operations. Montana Wing spends a significant amount of money training each every year for search and rescue missions. For cadets, the opportunities to participate in these events are more open in this state than most others. Civil Air Patrol has a challenging but applicable search and rescue curriculum. Some cadets through hard work and dedication can earn the rate of Ground Team member, which would allow them to participate in real search and rescue operations. However, despite the hard work cadets put into training, no one under the age of 18 is allowed to participate in search and rescue missions. If the state were to change the laws, it would allow the county sheriffs to utilize Civil Air Patrol cadets in missions if needed. I understand it sometimes is hard to trust the youth of our nation with duties such as this. However, I have personally seen the dedication in the young men and women that serve in Civil Air Patrol and believe they are up to the challenge. My training as a Civil Air Patrol cadet in search and rescue missions has played a crucial role in my success and helped prepare me for the life I live now as a Midshipman at the United States Naval Academy. Colonel Robert Hoffman is the Wing Commander of Montana Civil Air Patrol and is willing to provide you more information if needed. I would like to personally thank each of you to your service to the state of Montana.

Very Respectfully,

John Scott Shaffer
Former Cadet First Lieutenant Shaffer United States Air Force Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol