

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 2/19/05
HB 561

February 14, 2005
House Judiciary Committee
Hearing on HB 561

To the Members of the House Judiciary Committee

I offer this as testimony in support of HB 561 – a bill to abolish the death penalty. I support this bill because I consider state-sanctioned killing barbaric and unworthy of an enlightened, democratic society.

Capital punishment is violent and arbitrary, harkening back to more primitive and punitive times. It diminishes our society and places us outside the circle of civilized nations and squarely in the company of barbarous regimes such as North Korea, China, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Sudan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. As practiced in the United States, the death penalty is random and discriminatory and has been a tool of racism and oppression. It is a practice that should be a relic of history.

I would like to consider myself a citizen of an enlightened nation. If I cannot be this, I would at least like to consider myself a citizen of an enlightened state. Please pass this bill and abolish the death penalty in Montana.

Thank you.

Sydney Taber