

To: Jan Stetzer  
1400 Broadway  
Helena, Mt. 59620  
406-444-5309  
jstetzer@mt.gov

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY	
EXHIBIT NO.	23
DATE:	1-17-05
BILL NO.	SB137

From: Bill and Linda Woolsey  
Tattoos By Big Bill L.L.C.  
4775 Hwy 2 West  
Columbia Falls, Mt. 59912  
406-257-7740  
tattoosbybigbill@yahoo.com

Subject: Information to support Senate Bill NO. 137  
Introduced By D. Lewis

Date: January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you today in response to and support of Senate Bill No. 137. I regret that I am unable to attend this session to offer my support in person. My hope is that sensible and reasonable laws are passed to regulate our growing industry. In addition, I hope that your focus will also grow to include non-professional illegal operators. This type of operation poses an extreme risk to the public.

Tattooing and Body piercing is a medical art form and it should be held to the highest standard. It requires talent, training and experience to be done in a professional manner. A tattoo artist should have a tattooing and/or body piercing apprenticeship that he or she has completed. National tattooing/body piercing organizations are now calling for a three-year program. The apprentice is required to learn from a Master tattoo artist. A tattoo artist should also have a strong artistic background and demonstrated ability. The artistic and technical competency of the artist is extremely important. After all, you don't want to go to a tattoo artist whose artistic ability is at an elementary level. Without the proper knowledge to use their equipment effectively, they pose a higher risk of secondary infection and scarification to their client. A tattoo artist should also possess a strong knowledge of blood born disease prevention. He or she must also maintain high standards concerning the types of inks and equipment they use, always keeping in mind the health and safety of their clients. Severe allergic reactions to tattoo inks are rare. However, Some ink products on the market today pose a much higher risk for allergic reactions and other potential serious health problems. In fact, some of the "certified shops" seem to be more interested in the bottom dollar rather than the safety of their clients. In addition, a professional state certified tattoo/body-piercing studio should look more like a clean medical clinic rather than a dirty, sleazy shop from a Hollywood movie set.

Montana also has a real problem with non-certified non-professional people tattooing and piercing out of their homes and /or their garages. Many of which have learned primitive tattooing in prison and turn to it on the outside as a quick way to make a buck. Without the knowledge of blood born diseases, the proper professional training or equipment they are a high risk for anyone who may receive a tattoo or piercing. At present, there is no rules or regulations to prevent or stop this type of practice. What if it was your son or daughter receiving a tattoo from one of these people? Remember, they do not have an autoclave for sterilization or an inspector to over see their operation. A lot of them use office supply inks and they tend to reuse needles to cut costs or they don't realize what risk this type of operation poses.

There are some of us in Montana who have been fighting for years to make our industry safer for the public. We are hoping that you will stand with us and make it possible to stop the people who are operating in an unsafe manner. Unfortunately, the public seems to think that the laws are already in place and that they are safe no matter where they go because they believe that the State of Montana is looking after them. So lets do the right thing and lets pass some reasonable laws that will protect everyone and help our industry grow into something that we all can be proud of.

Sincerely,

Bill Woolsey  
Master Tattoo Artist