EXHIBIT 23
DATE 3/15/2011
SB 185

LIZ RANTZ, MD
BOX 8808
MISSOULA, MT 59807

March 15, 2011

RE: Death Penalty Abolition SB185

To the Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to strongly support abolition of the death penalty in Montana. I have been a physician for 30 years, the last 20 in county and state correctional health care. I oppose the death penalty for the following reasons, recognizing that there are many others:

1) It is not a deterrent to crime. Despite the popular media presentations of premeditated murder, the killing of another person almost always occurs out of anger, alcohol, too easy access to a lethal weapon etc. The potential implications are not considered by the offender.
2) It keeps the grieving families and friends from reaching closure, and from any opportunity to reconcile with the offender. Victim mediation is not possible.
3) It precludes the opportunity for redemption by the offender.
4) It commits the legal system into long and expensive trials and retrials.
5) It violates international human rights codes.
6) It creates a stressful situation in the prison for the duration of the anticipated execution.
7) Medically, it is a farce to talk about "humane" execution; all recognized medical associations have now said participation by a physician violates our professional roles.
8) There is much talk about innocent persons being executed, about the long time between crime and execution, etc. The implication being that if the legal justice system worked better it would be ok to impose the death penalty. This is simply false. Civilized society should not execute people. As the saying goes, "An eye for an eye would make the whole world blind." If we kill those who kill us, where will it stop? What a terrible message to give the children of Montana.

PLEASE VOTE TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY. I urge you to at least vote this bill to the floor for a full debate. It is too important that Montana make a statement about our belief in justice to allow the decision to be made by a few in committee.

Thank You,

Liz Rantz, MD (electronic signature)