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REP. NO. SB220

**Mr. Chairman
Members of the Committee
My name is John Meyer M E Y E R**

I come before you today as a 5th generation Montanan who opposes SB 220 and who wants Montana to continue to truly be the Last Best Place – a place where we honor and care for the lives of those who have made it so.

One of the reasons we can call ours the Last Best Place is our rich Native American population. In my studies of Montana, beginning in grade school, I was taught about the way Native Americans elders are revered and cared for - honored by the whole tribe. – different from say fast paced east or west coasts where elders are often times marginalized even by their own families.

Montana is different.

We CARE ABOUT OUR ELDERS and we care about our dying.

SB 220 is not promoting the respect and honor that I believe Montanan's espouse. Instead it shows that the real issue is protecting the physician. The title of this bill couldn't make this more obvious. Furthermore this was the main contention at this hearing in 2011. Senator

February 11, 2013

Blewett, in reference to SB 167 he said, "under the current law ... there's nothing to protect the doctor from prosecution."

Since that day I have worked to gather signatures of some of the thousands of Montanans against assisted suicide, and I would like to share with you my experience at this grassroots level. Overwhelmingly, people are passionate and adamantly opposed to the idea of assisted suicide; quite frankly they are appalled and disappointed that Montana would consider Hemlock Society solutions.

I feel two things when I encounter this response. One, people are tired of having to deal with death. They want life giving solutions. And two, they are weary of you – with all due respect – they are weary of the muddled, convoluted, slow reactions to issues that matter. They are tired of waiting for meaningful solutions, and what hurts the most is when they say – "it won't really matter, but I will sign it anyway."

Please do what's right – do what your gut tells you is right – and for the sake of these folks - the ones who make ours the Last Best Place – act swiftly and confidently.

Thank you.