

Chairman Murphy, Vice-Chairman Sales and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am Christina Hayden. I live in Butte. My mother used alcohol to kill herself, unassisted. My father, a physician, came to the edge of taking his own life, in despair, because he couldn't save his own wife.

There is no freedom to choose to execute oneself in unassisted suicide in Montana. In spite of suicide being illegal, this isn't much of a deterrent, as **Montana has one of the highest suicide rates in the U.S.** Suicide ought to be deterred, not enabled by morphing it into legal homicide by complicit participation of a traditionally healing profession. The suicide rate of physicians isn't going to go down either, when healers become killers. Do you really want to lower the life expectancy in Montana?

What seems to be an issue here is ambivalence in one who doesn't want to take personal responsibility for ending his/her own life, unassisted. There is provision in Montana law for self determination in refusing medical treatment. Anyone who wants to suicide can do so without assistance. What's at stake is autonomy for **the physician who may be compelled, coerced to participate in executing his patient, who may be also coerced, to suicide**. That one would delegate one's responsibility for suicide to another manifests at least some degree of ambivalence. This is the gap where coercion of the vulnerable patient can serve **the self-interest of others, especially heirs** who stand to gain monetarily at the cost of his/her death.

An issue is coerced participation, compulsion, when the "right to be killed" trumps provisions to protect the physician from acting against his/her conscience or the ethics and morals of his/her profession or religion. There is **no "right to be killed" without soliciting the cooperation of a killer. Giving a patient lethal drugs isn't medicine, it's murder.**

Please give us a law that deters the physician from prescribing lethal drugs, and protects the patient from coerced suicide.

Please stop physician homicide. Leave suicide out of medicine!

Vote YES on HB 505.