

Chairman Dear Chairman Bennett, Vice Chairmen Doane and Court and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am Christina Hayden. I live in Butte.

The movement to protect with immunity before the law physicians who corrupt themselves at the heart by assisting in the suicides of these useless eaters is but a reaction of terror before a perceived inhumanity. We cannot so scorn the unaccommodated one, "without offense to God". That terminal one would become for us a terminated but living memorial to our lack of kindness. He connects his corrupted malefactors, all those who would provide for his suicide, with their own worst selves, present and long past, and with all they have alienated from themselves, from each other and from God. He would become our "modern scapegoat".

For those of us who would reduce "good" to the utility of a pain free life, a pain free death, William Wordsworth has these words from his poem, about an old beggar man in Cumberland:

*But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen! Ye  
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye  
Who have a broom still ready in your hands  
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,  
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate  
Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not  
A burthen of the earth!*

*(For) Man is dear to man; the poorest poor  
Long for some moments in a weary life  
When they can know and feel that they have been,  
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out  
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such  
As needed kindness, for this single cause,  
That we have all of us one human heart.*

We will all eventually be as helpless (though not as beautiful) as a newborn child, that most useless of creatures, when all we can do is search for nourishment and love. But let us look again, if the eyes of our hearts have not been blinded by our own unkindnesses, at the special beauty of being human, a beauty that is especially poignant in the child, the elderly, the unborn, the terminally ill and the dying.

The medicine for our inhumanity cannot be compounded of inhumanity. We must learn to love again— love those incomparably useless and precious beings, especially here the terminally ill who may be vulnerable to suicide, because they and we are one.

For we need to love as well as to be loved, to taste the sweetness of being human.

**Please vote YES on HB 328**

Testimony of Ben Cartwright, Ponderosa Ranch, Virginia City, in dialogue with his son, Joseph. Transcribed from BONANZA : Season 5, Episode 9 (3 & 4), originally aired Nov. 17, 1963. (Source: Google)

Ben: Men generally know the difference between right and wrong. When they're wrong they don't always like to admit it.

Joe: I don't know right from wrong anymore.

Ben: Surely , you don't want me to decide for you?

Joe: I don't. I have to make the decision myself. Maybe you could tell me what you would have done in the same situation. This situation could happen to anybody, and they'd have to decide.

A man is badly hurt, and his friend knows he's in a lot of pain, with only a short time to live, his last moments filled with agony. The man asks his friend if he would end it, and begs him to put him out of his misery, to just be able to die. And his friend kills him. Was that wrong, Pa?

Ben: Don't you know?

Joe: I'm not sure.

Ben: I'm sure. I'm very sure. That was wrong!

Joe: How can you be so sure, for what the friend was going through?

Ben: It wasn't up to the friend to make the decision, no matter how much pain the injured man was going through. It's not up to the friend to decide.

Jo: Can't you understand? He did it out of pity! He thought it would be more merciful! He couldn't watch this man die in agony!

Ben: He couldn't watch his friend die in agony? Well, how about the injured man? Don't you think that in his suffering, he was trying desperately to live, not to die?

Joe: He begged him to help him to die!

Ben: I've always believed that when a man is really badly hurt, when his body is badly broken, nature tries to pick up the pieces and make him whole again. Now , I don't know if she knows how much pain she is causing the man while she's mending his body, but her main purpose is to preserve life. To nature, life is sacred, whether the body is whole or crippled. That's why I think that no one has the right to end someone else's life. Nature doesn't give up that easily. She's always working for survival, not for destruction. She doesn't always know when she's licked. When she finally does admit to it, I guess there's nothing a man can do except to yield to the inevitable. But until that moment. No man has the right morally or legally to snuff out a man's chance to survive.

Jo: Then you'd just let him suffer?

Ben: I'd help him all I could. I'd do everything I could, get all the help. I'd try to ease the pain. I have seen a man in this condition. I've seen a lot of men trampled in the stampedes. None of them died right away. They were in terrible pain, but none of them wanted to die. See, a man, when he is in bad pain, doesn't know what he is saying. His body is fighting for survival and his mind isn't always aware of that. It's suffering the pain, so he begs to die. He shouldn't be listened to. The friend should listen only to the pulse of life. Fight with it, not against it . You think about it, Joe.

Dear Chairman Bennett, Vice Chairmen Doane and Court, and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am Christina Hayden. I live in Butte.

My mother used alcohol to kill herself, "unassisted", when I was 16. 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 hasn't been much of a deterrent, as **Montana already ranks in the top 5 states for rate of suicide in the U.S.** Suicide ought to be deterred, not enabled by morphing it into legal homicide by complicit participation of members 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?

The young are learning and already participating. Many Montana communities have experienced epidemics of teen suicides. We had 30 suicides in Butte in 2012 and 2013, with 4 being teen suicides. Physicians ought to be required by law to contact the **Montana Suicide Prevention Program** of the Department Health and Human Services paid for by Montana taxpayers, when there is any request to assist in suicide.

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 not only life itself, but 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 prevents physicians from prescribing lethal drugs, and protects the patient from coerced suicide.**

**Please stop physician homicide. Leave suicide out of medicine!**

**Vote YES on HB 328**