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SENATE JUDICIARY
Exhibit no. 21
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FILED SB202

Montana Senate
Montana State Capitol
Helena, Montana
These United States of America

10 February 2015

Dear Montana Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Dr. Robin Lynn Treptow; I live in Great Falls. As holder of a doctorate in clinical psychology and licensed psychologist in Colorado, I oppose SB 202.

I have one key point: people can be psychologically led to make poor choices for themselves. Simple examples are eating poorly or not exercising. This is why Montana's 1895 legislation—recodified thrice & on the books today as 94-35-215—reads, "every person who deliberately aids, or advises or encourages another to commit suicide is guilty of a felony."

Two psychological principles apply—first, self-fulfilling prophecy—where you think something will occur so make choices that cause it to happen and second, universal learned helplessness—where you see a bad situation as so hopeless that you take no action to stop it.

Senate Bill 202 presumes "self-selected death" to be an "okay choice" when you are faced with an expectation—a prophecy, if you will—that you will die sooner rather than later: particularly when you (or your doctor) believe nothing can change this outcome.

You need to know that it is far too easy to undermine a person's 'will to live'. The human psyche is a delicate interweaving of 1) our thoughts; 2) our feelings; and 3) our wills. Harms to these aspects of the self impede wise choices.

Here is how it would look under SB 202:

- First, the thought, "doctors will help me live" is muddled by "doctors will help me kill myself"; or for doctors, the thought, "I help people live" becomes, "I help people kill themselves".
- Second, feelings of "wanting to live" are replaced by feelings of "giving up on my life because it is too difficult"; or for doctors, the feeling, "I like helping others live" erodes into "I like to help people die".
- Finally, a will to "live and to live well" gives way to desires to "get a prescription so that I might die"; or for doctors, "I want this person live" morphs into, "I want this person to die".

To close, for any group to gain authority to help you to take your own life is a psychological catastrophe: not only for the weak and vulnerable—but for everyone. As legislators, we the people appeal to you and count on you to protect us from ourselves! Vote against SB 202.

Sincerely,

