

Dear Chairman Sales, Vice Chairman Fielder, and members of the Senate 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~~ <sup>NO</sup> on SB202