

Testimony to Senate Committee in opposition to HB477 - David Cooper

Mister Chairman, Members of the Committee. My name is David Cooper of Jefferson City, and I am here speaking on behalf of the 70% of Montanans who believe that they have the right to seek a reasonable end should they be faced with intolerable suffering.

I do not believe that the legislature would seek action to prevent a physician from providing medication to relieve a patient's pain. Why then would the legislature limit doctors' options in situations when the patient and medical science have reached their limits?

No one would suggest that any physician should be required to provide this service, nor that any patient would be required to take it. It's a choice each patient and physician should be free to make. The state should not be in the business of taking away the patient's "right to privacy" when determining their best medical option. Forcing dying people to suffer longer than they wish to is abuse; Aid in Dying is compassion and honoring the patient's wishes.

This bill is supported by people who wish to have their personal beliefs imposed on those with different beliefs. That is not in accordance with the principles of this state or country; this is an individual matter and we each have the right to our own beliefs.

This bill is contrary to the premise of small government. First, this is government intruding on the private relationship between a patient and their physician. Second, the cost to the state of enforcement and incarceration would be in excess of \$350,000 per physician. Surely the legislature can find better uses for those funds.

The vast majority of the people in Montana urge you to honor the individual rights of the terminally ill by rejecting HB477. Thank you.