

Chairman Berry, Committee Members and Staff, thank you for your time.

I am Allen Casteel, representing the Denturist Association of Montana

I am here to talk about fairness. Without equal representation, Denturists have been at the mercy of a regulatory body that is dominated by members of a profession who are opposed to the profession of Denturistry. Dentist members of the Board are members of the Montana Dental Association, and by extension, the American Dental Association. Stated goals of the ADA are to oppose Denturistry at every opportunity. Contrary to the will of the American Dental Association, Denturistry is a growing profession world-wide.

As a separately educated and licensed profession, with a separate statutory Practice Act, we feel that we should not be regulated by a hostile profession. We have statutory regulation in place – we do not need supervision by a board of dentists. In almost every jurisdiction where Denturistry is a vibrant profession, they are not regulated by dentists but have their own regulatory boards.

At the direction of the MDA, dentist members of the Board refuse to recognize our statutory right to practice through their illegal promulgation of rules designed to restrict our scope of practice.

The Board's stated position for dentists is that if a dentist is trained, educated and experienced in a procedure, they may practice that procedure. As an example, the Board has ruled dentists are allowed to administer Botox and dermal fillers.

They refuse to recognize the same standards for Denturists. A specific example: I am trained, educated and experienced in providing oral anti-snoring appliances. The Board illegally tried to prohibit my providing these appliances until its decision was overturned by a District Court ruling. Once the Board received the Court decision it failed to act for nearly a year to remove the disciplinary notification placed in the public records. This shows bias and discrimination against my professional abilities and my profession.

In instances where Denturists do attend advanced education, the Board has threatened us with sanctions, if we use designations and degrees we have earned.

Title 37-29-301 says "A person shall hold a license for the practice of Denturistry in order to perform the following acts:

- (2) Use in conjunction with the person's name, the words or letters "denturist", "L.D." or any other (emphasis added) words, letters, abbreviations, or insignia implying that the person is engaged in the practice of denturistry.

On February 15, 2000, the Board sent a letter to the Denturist Association referencing restrictions in Title 37, Chapter 4. Denturists are exempt from the provisions of this Chapter. Denturists are regulated under Chapter 29. A copy of that letter is included in my written

testimony. I do not believe the Board has the authority or ability to recognize denturist educational institutions.

I have also included a letter from the Montana Dental Association to Dr. Wayne Hansen, then President of the Board of Dentistry, trying to insert itself into the regular operation of the Board by providing legal counsel for the Board.

This pattern of abuse by the Board does not, in any way, serve to protect the health and welfare of the people of Montana. It only serves to restrict the access of people already in need of services a denturist can safely provide. Denturists work as legitimate, equal partners in providing appropriate health care services.

We work with every branch of dentistry and many other medical providers for the benefit of our patients. At a time when the focus is on achieving affordable, accessible, safe healthcare, dentistry, through its associations and the Board, is trying to reassert its monopoly and restrict or eliminate access to care for tens of thousands of Montanans.

We are not asking for special treatment, we are asking for fair treatment. You can do this by removing Denturists from the Board of Dentistry or restructuring the current board to be more equitable to each profession it regulates.

Thank you again for your time.

Allen L Casteel, MT Denturist #22  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Denturist Association of Montana