

DENTURIST ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA

Allen Casteel, President
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January 10, 2012

Economic Affairs Interim Committee
Representative Tom Berry, Chairman
PO Box 201706
Helena MT 59620-1706

Dear Chairman Berry and Committee Members,

The Denturist Association of Montana was disappointed in the actions of the Montana Board of Dentistry when it chose to reject a plan supported by both the denturists and the Montana Dental Hygiene Association.

In the December 2, 2011 Board of Dentistry meeting, the Montana Dental Association stated that its two goals were to keep the Board of Dentistry intact and to form two committees that would address the issues specific to denturistry and dental hygiene.

The Denturist Association of Montana, later supported by the Montana Dental Hygienist Association, accommodated the Montana Dental Association by proposing a plan that added an additional Denturist to the Board and forming two committees within the Board that would recommend rules to the entire Board of Dentistry for their approval. The Board would need to muster a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote to override the committees' recommendations. The Board would also have to act within 90 days on the recommendations.

This approach leaves the Board intact, and institutes committees that are meaningful.

On January 4, 2012, the Board rejected the joint compromise offered by the Denturists and Hygienists by a vote of each dentist (absent the chairman who does not vote except in the case of a tie) and the two public members. Instead they passed a watered down version of the committee concept that will have no real force or likely effect.

If the dentists on the Board were genuinely interested in the addressing this issue, they could have done it at any time. They clearly are interested in maintaining their "muscle" over the other professions. This "new" suggestion is clearly a stall tactic on the part of the Montana Dental Association.

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In particular, the American Dental Association, of which the Montana Dental Association is a constituent, has been clear about its “vigorous opposition” to denturists across the country (2001 American Dental Association Policy #436). It is unrealistic to expect that denturists will ever get a fair shake out of this board. As far as dental hygienists are concerned, they have been under the control of dentists for decades.

In December, the Federal Trade Commission ruled and ratified its decision that another dental board violated federal restraint of trade rules. Montana is most likely in the same position. The two powerless committees envisioned by the Montana Dental Association would have no real voice. While the Montana Board of Dentistry’s 10 members include 5 dentists, two public members, two hygienists and one denturist, there is no way that any motion made by the denturist committee could be passed if the dentists didn’t like it. Even if the public members, the hygienists and the denturists voted as a block (the record reflects the public members overwhelmingly side with the dentists), the dentists could defeat the motion on 5-5 tie. Motion dies on a tie. So no changes proposed by anyone other than dentists could succeed if the dentists so chose. The Montana Dental Association knows this.

We ask that you not be misled that the Montana Dental Association proposal is in any way palatable to the Denturist Association of Montana. We reject it outright and respectfully ask that you do the same.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Allen L. Casteel, President
Denturist Association of Montana

Cc: Pat Murdo, Lead Staff