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Assisted Suicide Initiative Draws Opponents from Seattle & Sioux Falls

Two ballot question committees have formed to oppose South Dakota's "Death with Dignity"/assisted suicide initiative, and that initiative hasn't even made the ballot yet.

On June 17, [Seattle attorney Margaret K. Dore](#) filed a statement of organization for "Choice Is an Illusion South Dakota" (mmm... let's get metaphysical). Dore [writes frequently in opposition](#) to "death with dignity" laws in her home state of Washington and elsewhere, saying that laws allowing terminally ill patients to request lethal prescriptions to end their lives early open the door to elder abuse. South Dakota's measure is largely copied from Washington's existing assisted-suicide statutes. Dore has [already launched a website](#) to campaign against the measure and discourage South Dakotans from signing the petition to place the initiative on the ballot. I will be curious to see whether Speaker G. Mark Mickelson and other Republicans [try to ban Dore's out-of-state money](#) from the debate over the assisted-suicide initiative.

[In a May 20 blog post](#) urging South Dakotans not to sign the assisted-suicide petition, Dore claims, "The measure is sold as completely voluntary, but someone else is allowed to speak for the patient during the lethal dose request process, even a stranger." This claim is deceptive: the [initiative text circulating](#) requires two witnesses sign a patient's written request for life-ending drugs, but nothing in the initiative authorizes anyone to "speak for" a terminally ill patient; the patient herself must make every request.

On June 23, Lance Nielsen of Sioux Falls filed a statement of organization for "Suicide Is Suicide." Nielsen gives his committee's street address as 2101 W. 41st St., Sioux Falls, SD 57105, which is also the address for the [Samp Law Office](#). Someone has reserved the domain name suicideissuicide.org for Nielsen's committee to use for a contact e-mail address, but no website has yet been posted to that domain.

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