

As a Catholic, I believe in the dignity of every human life from beginning to end. However, it is simply an issue of reason and common sense. We do not "will" ourselves to be brought into this world, no matter how much we think we do. We do not choose to be created. Therefore, we do not have a "right" to decide when to end our lives either.

By passing this bill, it will only start a cascade of other issues. The elderly and terminally ill might feel pressured or obligated to ask for lethal drugs, either by their families or by doctors. Even worse, doctors and insurance companies may choose to only provide lethal drugs in certain situations with the most vulnerable in our society, or at least promote them.

What kind of profit will the drug companies be making off of this? Will doctors feel pressured to meet certain quotas or will the companies try and increase the number of patients using their drugs, like they do the the birth control pills? Are we going to exploit the vulnerable, sick, and dying and turn it into a way to make money off of their last days? Instead, let us put more of an effort into Hospice care and nursing facilities. Let's put more money into cancer research and life-saving drugs, or comforting drugs, instead of life-ending drugs.

Will this start a campaign for euthanasia of babies born with disabilities or sicknesses? If the parents have the right to abort them in the womb, why not outside of the womb? This is the danger that we are facing.

My grandfather is currently in his last days being treated at a nursing facility. It is easy sometimes to want this suffering to be over for him, to let him slip quietly away with a magic pill. However, I am reminded time and time again of what an important role he has right now. He is still just as much of a human as he was before his illness and dementia. He teaches me how to love, and how to suffer gracefully. He never complains, but takes everything with courage and humility. This is what we need to teach to my generation and younger, to have examples like my grandfather to teach us what is really important in life. He has had a huge impact on my 19-year-old sister, who visits him every day and was brought back from the brink of a self-destructive lifestyle simply because of his witness. This would never have happened if he chose to die early. With the passing of this bill, our society will only further decline into a state of "quick fixes" and

laziness. We will be left with examples of fear and cowardice, to end suffering quickly and not look at it square in the eye.

But this is what happens in a culture that seeks to get rid of all suffering, both in living and dying. we have lost its meaning, so it's no surprise that this issue has come up.

I understand why people support this bill. I understand the fear that is associated with being diagnosed with a terminal disease and the fear that comes along with suffering. But no suffering is useless. It is only useless if we decide to not give it a purpose. If we choose to ignore its purpose we take the quick way out. Some people are brought to important realizations when they enter into a significant state of suffering. It is our role to help them through this process, to be there for them and not make them feel alone, instead of adding to their despair. We need to tell them that they are worth it. "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope."

This bill has been labeled "Dying with Dignity" or "Compassionate Aid". But suicide can never be called dying with dignity on any level. Dying with dignity is what my grandfather is doing. Dying with dignity is not telling the person that the rest of their lives don't matter, or that they shouldn't be seen in a state of suffering, but honoring their personhood and giving them all the love and care in the world through palliative care.

Please, set an example for our state. Let us teach our generations how to live in the process of dying, and what it means to be human. We have a right to live, a right to be loved.

Signed,

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