

## Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

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**From:** tschirharts <johntschaol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2015 3:25 PM  
**To:** JudTestimony  
**Subject:** HB7015 Physician-assisted suicide

Testimony from  
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To members of the Judiciary Committee:

We urge you to oppose assisted suicide HB7015 .

Supporters say it's all about personal freedom. But assisted suicide laws cannot be designed to prevent abuse, which is just one reason that the American Medical Association opposes it: "Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks."

One serious societal risk is the terrible message physician-assisted suicide sends to teenagers. We already see an increased fascination among teens for book and tv shows that glamorize death. Nearly 19% of American teens say they have experienced depression, 10% report suicide thoughts. Experts tell us that suicidal people have a diminished capacity to make a freely reasoned decision to end their lives.

Suicidal people need treatment for depression, not help in committing suicide. Offer a depressed persons suicide and you take everything away from them, even hope.

If we legalize physician-assisted suicide, what message would we be sending to our elderly and infirm? Might loving parents/spouses feel guilty going through a terminal illness, watching their family members' lives made difficult and perhaps their estates diminish – when such a "simple" solution is available? Under such circumstances, would they feel truly free to reject that solution? Couldn't the right to die become a perceived obligation to die? What a terrible burden that could be, both for the sick and for their families.

If it's all about personal autonomy, on what grounds can we grant the suicide option to the terminally or very seriously ill, but refuse that same autonomy to others? Arguments for physician-assisted suicide could similarly be made for a healthy person who is going through a very difficult time -- for example feeling unable to face financial ruin. On what basis could we refuse him/her a means to end it all? Who are we to judge their emotional pain? Even when such an individual's own physician were to refuse a suicide assist request, Oregon has shown us there are groups ready to help suicide-minded persons "doctor shop", to steer people to one or more "cooperative" physicians. These physicians could know very little about the patient they aid in dying, other than the patient wished it.

Physician-assisted suicide can seem merciful, but its dark side is too dangerous, especially for the most vulnerable of our citizens.

Please vote "No" on assisted suicide.