

Members of the Public Health Committee,

I strongly encourage you to oppose HB 5417. Although couched in palatable language, the text of the legislation clearly permits suicide. This begs the question: Is it so compassionate to allow our most vulnerable citizens to kill themselves? According to the American Association of Suicidology, one leading cause of suicide is untreated depression. This legislation's answer to the problem is: let them kill themselves. How does this make sense? A terminally ill patient may feel as if they have no value in life which will lead to discouragement, and unfortunately, this legislation agrees. You may think that it is compassionate to allow someone who is suffering to prematurely end his or her life, but I disagree. True compassion involves:

- ...Preserving and protecting human life
- ...Providing physical and spiritual support
- ...Promoting respect for those with physical difficulties

We must as a society value life. It is in the moral and historical fabric of this great nation to preserve and defend life. When we lose this most basic and fundamental principle — respect for human life — we lose one of the major cornerstones upon which this great nation has been founded.

The laws of our state should have one of two purposes: to protect our citizens from wrong and harmful actions or behaviors, or to encourage and promote right and positive actions or behaviors. Through the enacting of this proposed legislation, we are doing more than simply allowing assisted suicide; we are encouraging and promoting death. We must not allow this to happen; our laws must reflect the intrinsic value of human life.

Throughout our history, countless men and women have sacrificed their own lives to preserve this ideal, believing that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that life is not to be valued only if it is deemed of a worthy quality. Human life is to be valued at all the various stages of living.

You are the elected leaders of this great state. It is to you that we have entrusted the sacred responsibility of defending and preserving life. I urge you to stand up for what is right! Instead of giving the patients the right to die, show a true act of compassion by giving them the hope to live!

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