

I am here in strong opposition to HB 5898.

Words seem cheap in today's world. But they still hold weight. I urge you to be objective and honest in examining some of the wording in the bill.

A patient may self-administer medication to bring about his or her death—to cause death. The definition of suicide is to kill oneself on purpose—to cause one's death. An objective look at the wording must conclude that the bill is describing suicide. But the bill later says that prescribing meds for this purpose shall not constitute assisting suicide. By the bill's own definition, this is inconsistent and dishonest.

This bill describes self-administration of meds as causing death. But then it instructs physicians to list the cause of death as the underlying terminal illness. This too, by the bill's own definition, is inconsistent and dishonest.

So why the dishonesty? Why fudge things? It's because words matter. Suicide troubles our conscience—as it should—but helping people is something we all strive to do.

A Gallup poll in 2013 showed that 70% of Americans agreed that doctors should be allowed to painlessly end a patient's life if the patient and family wanted it. But only 51% in the same poll supported physician assisted suicide. A 19 point difference based on a change in wording. That's huge.

We all know that life is precious. We are reminded of that daily. When we encounter death, everything in us wants to resist, to fight, to protect life.

This bill tries to artificially soothe our troubled consciences. But it can't do so honestly or rationally. When we are honest, when we are rational, we know that death is wrong, and choosing death should never be encouraged.

I ask you to please reject HB 5898.

Thank you,

Julianna Bennett