

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN  
FROM George McKeon

I am against H.B. 5898 – An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients.

Laws allowing Physician Assisted Suicide are ripe for abuse. For instance, once the lethal prescription is handed to the patient, there is no accountability of what takes place next. A third party (including someone who stands to benefit financially from the patient's death) could administer the drug to the patient without patient consent, even if the patient changed her mind and struggled against the overdose. Laws do not require consent at the time of death, only consent to obtain the lethal prescription a distinction which can give someone other than the patient the power to decide when death occurs. In reality, there is no protected "choice" as proponents claim.

Doctor prescribed death involves more than the patient. It necessitates a host of participants, including a doctor, a pharmacist and the state. It's a public act that requires medicine, law and society approve a lethal prescription that crosses the line between caring and killing.

Social acceptance of physician-assisted suicide tells elderly, disabled and dependent citizens that their lives are not valuable. Doctors who list death by assisted suicide among the medical options for a terminally or chronically ill patient communicate hopelessness, not compassion.

Society-approved death puts elders at risk for abuse through include; being coerced, pressured or even forced into suicide.

The so-called "right to die" may soon become the "duty to die" as our senior, disabled and depressed family members are pressured or coerced into ending their lives.

Every day patients demonstrate their faith in the medical profession by taking medications and agreeing to treatment on the advice of their physicians. Patients trust that the physicians' actions are in their best interest with the goal of protecting life.

Physician-assisted suicide endangers this trust relationship by making physicians actors in a patient's death.

Those are my concerns.

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