Physician-Assisted Suicide is Bad Public Policy

“True compassion leads to sharing another’s pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear.”


“You matter until the last moment of your life, and we will do all that we can, not only to help you die peacefully, but to help you live until you die.”

-Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the first modern hospice in London in 1968

Marriage, Family & Respect Life Ministries
Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington, VT
351 North Ave, Burlington, VT 05401

Email Contact:
mmorin@VermontCatholic.org

For more information on physician-assisted suicide please visit our web site:
www.vermontcatholic.org/Assisted Suicide
Five Arguments Against H.168: Physician-Assisted Suicide

1. Legalizing assisted suicide (voluntary euthanasia) will inevitably allow non-voluntary euthanasia. State courts have ruled time and again that if competent people have a right, the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment requires that incompetent people be given the same right. If incompetent persons are granted such rights by the court, it won't be the individual who makes a decision to die, but rather courts and state-appointed guardians will decide if someone else should die. Assisted suicide is an inevitable step toward euthanasia.

2. Passage of this bill will generally promote suicide in Vermont. By offering suicide to Vermont’s terminally ill citizens, the state declares that suicide is an acceptable option to Vermonters in difficult situations. The State has a long-standing obligation to care for its citizens in need, particularly its weakest and most vulnerable. Every Vermonter’s life is valuable, and we should be offering excellent pain relief, palliative care and treatment for depression rather than death. So precious is life that no person should be looked upon as a burden to be eliminated but as a gift to be treasured.

3. H.168 is NOT about individual rights and the ability to make health care choices. Vermonters already have strong laws in support of medical choices involving end-of-life care and treatment. There are laws supporting the writing of advance directives, allowing people to accept or reject medical interventions. H.168 is about allowing doctors to make medical choices for individuals. Assisted suicide does not involve just one person. H.168 permits other people to aid in the termination of human life. Under this proposal, at least two other persons, a physician and a pharmacist, would be required to become involved in the suicide, and society would be asked to condone it.

4. H.168 severely infringes upon the conscience of the health care community. Doctors, nurses and pharmacists should not be forced to participate in the intentional killing of a human being through assisting in suicide. The provisions of H.168 do not appropriately address the protection of conscience.

5. Catholics object to the language in H.168 that claims physician-assisted suicide will allow people to die in a “humane and dignified manner.” Intentional death by lethal prescription is neither humane nor dignified. The scientific advancements of our age should serve the cause of life, not destroy it.