

February 2017

Dear Governor Cuomo/New York State Senator/New York State Assembly Member:

As your constituent, I strongly oppose the legislation introduced this session to legalize physician-assisted suicide in New York State (A.2383/S.3151). Allowing doctors to prescribe a lethal dose for patients to end their lives devalues human life.

Legalizing physician-assisted suicide also sends mixed messages in our state's efforts to combat suicide, by suggesting that some suicides are acts filled with "dignity." Assisted suicide sends the message that some people - the very sick, the frail elderly, those with disabilities - would be better off dead.

There is real potential for abuse in legalizing physician-assisted suicide. Financial pressures from insurance companies, combined with pressure from those who might stand to gain from a patient's death, as well as from family members who feel overwhelmed and burdened, and from medical professionals making judgment calls about the quality of life—all of these should raise alarms, especially in an environment of increasing abuse and neglect of people with disabilities and those who are elderly.

Some patients with a terminal diagnosis may outlive their prognosis by months or even years. Some patients experience a full recovery. Some patients are misdiagnosed. Given these uncertainties, as well as the other concerns mentioned, the life-or-death decision of assisted suicide is unacceptable.

Instead, I urge you promote measures that will improve palliative care and hospice for the benefit of those who are terminally ill, ensuring that they receive compassionate, comprehensive care and pain management. We need to accompany people who are terminally ill rather than abandon them.

Please make every effort to prevent the legalization of physician-assisted suicide in our state.

Sincerely,

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Name (please print)

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Street Address (please print)

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City (please print)

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Zip Code