

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, people 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 pressures from those who might stand to gain from a patient's death, as well as family members feeling overwhelmed and burdened, and medical professionals making judgment calls about the quality of life—all of these things should raise alarms, especially in an environment of increasing abuse and neglect of people with disabilities and those who are aged.

Patients with a terminal diagnosis may outlive the medical expectation by months or even years. Some patients may experience a full recovery. Some patients may receive an inaccurate diagnosis. Making a life-or-death decision with these unknowns is unacceptable.

I urge you to focus on improving palliative care and hospice for the benefit of those who are terminally ill or disabled to ensure 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 legalizing 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