



THE ISSUE: SB 380 End of life. (Eggman, D).

SB 380 would allow for an individual to qualify for assisted suicide by making 2 oral requests a minimum of 48 hours apart reduced from the current 15 day period. It will also eliminate the requirement that an individual who is prescribed and ingests “aid-in-dying” medication make a final attestation. The bill would remove the sunset for the End of Life Option Act, making it permanent law without analyzing the data collected on the matter as the Act’s proposed original intention. **(OPPOSE)**

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Assisted suicide is already legal in California through the so-called End-of-Life Option Act, narrowly passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Brown in 2015. The bill received opposition from both Democrat and Republican legislators but was passed inappropriately during a Special Legislative Session on Medi-Cal funding.

During the Legislative hearing process, joint author of the legislation, former Sen. Bill Monning noted in California Healthline, “the joint and co-authors on this bill ... have endeavored to build in protections in this [measure] that are stronger than the protections in any of the states where this has been practiced.” (Source: <https://californiahealthline.org/morning-breakout/calif-is-one-step-closer-to-legal-physicianassisted-death/>)

The Death with Dignity Center, a partner of bill supporters Compassion & Choices, note on their current website FAQs, “Death with dignity statues contain a number of safeguards, protecting patients from abuse and coercion...the patient must make two oral requests, at least 15 days apart.” (Source: <https://www.deathwithdignity.org/faqs/>)

Now just four and a half years later, Senate Bill 380 proposed by Senator Susan Eggman (D-Stockton), an author of the 2016 End of Life Option Act law, attempts to remove many purported “safeguards” touted by the original End of Life Option Act bill authors.

CHURCH TEACHING

In the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, it clearly states that intentional euthanasia, sometimes called mercy killing, is murder. Regardless of the motives or means, euthanasia consists of putting to death those who are sick, disabled, or are dying. **It is morally unacceptable.** The emergence of physician-assisted suicide, popularized by the right-to-die- movement, seeks to legalize what is an immoral act.

TALKING POINTS

- ▶ After only 4 years and 3 published annual reports by the California Department of Public Health, this bill will end the existing 2025 sunset date and the legislative reevaluation option four years early. This law was implemented in 2016 with very specific requirements. Sound decision-making and science require a more robust data set to evaluate the law’s impact. **The Legislature should not prematurely eliminate the law’s evaluation timeline with incomplete data, especially given the introduction of a worldwide pandemic.**
- ▶ **Rather than addressing the persistent MediCal question of unequal access to quality hospice and palliative care for the underserved and needy, SB 380 offers the state a cheaper solution.** It can be viewed as encouraging terminally ill MediCal patients to choose the less expensive option of assisted suicide since quality care is not always available to them and they fear being a financial or emotional burden to their families.
- ▶ SB 380 will severely compromise the ability of health care organizations to work with their employees to be faithful to their choice to not participate in this activity which they view as an inappropriate and/or immoral response. This lack of respect for diversity of opinions will undoubtedly lead to lawsuits which may increase state costs.

“What a tragedy it is that the very people trained to heal the injured and care for the sick, have become dealers in death... Even if a patient requests assisted suicide, it remains an "inexcusable injustice." - John Pau II: Dying with Dignity