

April 18, 2023

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

First, I would like to say thank you for taking the time to read the following letter. I am sure that there are a lot of things to take into consideration when a controversial issue such as this arises. A lot of weight and responsibility rests upon your shoulders in making a decision that has the potential to affect the lives of many. So again, thank you. My hope is that I can present some plausible arguments against approving HB 2279 and other legislation which involves the same key elements.

I have examined various arguments in support of this measure. However, I do not believe they take into consideration the full spectrum of the benefit to risk profile. Already I believe there is too much leniency in the determination of who is eligible for physician assisted suicide. Several have argued in favor based upon the scenario of terminally ill patients. However, there is much room for error in the determination of who is or is not eligible to receive assistance to die. There are several conditions which could be perceived to fit the definition. However, these same conditions may have remedies that would allow an individual to live a complete, gratifying life apart from suicide.

Just as an example, an individual who undergoes a neurological trauma may lose many of the capabilities they had prior to their illness which may naturally lead to depression, emotional distress, and the desire to undergo assisted suicide to alleviate the difficulty in coping with their lifelong illness. Based upon the prognosis, it may be deemed plausible for that individual to receive his request for end of life care. But that same affected individual may not have a clear understanding of all the options available to them to help overcome their circumstances. I believe the emphasis should always be placed on both physical and emotional healing rather than terminating life. Likewise, it should always be the aim to help individuals overcome their difficult circumstances out of a spirit of love and compassion rather than helping them just accept defeat.

In making Oregon a state where it is more readily available to receive physician assisted suicide, I believe the message being projected throughout the country is that we as Oregonians prefer give up when things get really hard. Rather the aim should be to take the lead by providing individuals all of the options and resources possible to help them live long, gratifying lives regardless of their unfortunate circumstances. This is where the emphasis and funding should be directed. Helping individuals recognize their value regardless of their race, creed, or disability.

I ask you to please oppose the passage HB 2279. You have a great opportunity to represent fellow Oregonians and show what real, genuine compassion looks like. You have the potential to help many individuals throughout the country understand their unique value to society by not encouraging death as a remedy to life's challenges.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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