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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1003

This current proposed amendment is not dramatic. However, what is dramatic are the changes I have witnessed over the last twenty years in the practice of provider-hastened death. What was previously occasional, a back-up plan, and meant to address rare cases, has become hauntingly routine. These laws have changed the culture of medicine slowly but surely, from a focus on life to almost an obsession with death. As a physician, I have worked in hospitals as well as inpatient and outpatient hospice. I have seen the first response to the suffering of patients in many locations to go from "how can we care for this person?" to "how can we hasten this person's death?" This change has been dramatic and consistent. The proponents of provider-hastened death are mostly well-meaning, seeing themselves as providing a needed service to relieve suffering. But the cost of this is the ushering of death into a position of leadership, which is disaster to the medical profession and to the patients. Death is inevitable--respect, honor, and care are needed as we reach the final chapters of life. But death's appetite is never satisfied. The more you feed it with laws like this, the less life your society will have.