

Submitter:

Marcia Marhefka MD

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1003

As a physician dedicated to the care, dignity, and well-being of my patients, I am writing to express my deep opposition to the practice and expanding the legalization of physician-assisted suicide.

The role of the physician is rooted in the timeless principles of healing, compassion, and the preservation of life. The trust patients place in us is built upon the understanding that we will do everything within our ability to alleviate suffering without hastening death. Assisted suicide fundamentally alters this trust and the nature of our profession. It blurs the line between healer and executioner, undermining the commitment to "first, do no harm."

While I fully acknowledge the profound suffering experienced by some individuals at the end of life, there are ethically sound and compassionate alternatives. Palliative care and hospice services have advanced significantly, offering effective management of pain and other distressing symptoms. These approaches allow patients to spend their final days with dignity and comfort, surrounded by loved ones and supported by a medical team devoted to their care.

Assisted suicide also presents dangerous societal implications. It risks sending a message to vulnerable populations—including the elderly, disabled, and those suffering from mental illness—that their lives are less valuable or unworthy of care and protection. It may introduce subtle pressures to choose death over life, especially in environments where medical costs and caregiving burdens are considerable.

Moreover, the potential for abuse and misapplication of assisted suicide laws cannot be ignored. Even with safeguards in place, there is no way to ensure with absolute certainty that such a decision is made freely, without coercion, or fully informed by all available alternatives.

As a medical professional, I stand firmly with the principle that every human life holds inherent value, regardless of age, ability, or prognosis. Our duty is to care, to comfort, and to accompany our patients through suffering—not to abandon them to a decision to die.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marcia Marhefka