

Submitter: D. Joy Riley M.D. M.A.
On Behalf Of: Vulnerable people endangered by Oregon's law
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1003
To Oregon Legislators considering SB 1003:

As you are aware, the law is both a guardrail and a tutor. That matters – a lot. So does how we treat the vulnerable amongst us, and the vulnerable are not only the hospitalized seriously or terminally ill.

When the relative of someone very close to me was ill in a hospital in Oregon, “Emily” approached me. She wanted to know if the doctors could give her relative something to “end his suffering.” Perhaps they could even do it on Emily’s birthday, since she had had so many hard, unpleasant birthdays already. What would be the harm of one more?

I spoke at length with Emily, reassuring her that every day of her loved one’s life counted. After all, each day brought a new opportunity for some reconciliation with an estranged loved one, or the privilege of communicating the relative’s love or gratitude to someone who mattered to him. Medications and therapies can help with the pain. Ending her relative’s suffering by prematurely terminating his life would not solve problems, but create lifelong regret for Emily and many others. Emily and other family members would be complicit in the deed, along with the physician(s) involved.

Thankfully, Emily listened. Her grandfather had another week or so of life, and was able to relate to his family during that time. Instead of a birthday inundated with sadness, Emily was able to fly to his bedside and see him once more – alive!

Changing the law in one state affects more than the people in that state, as the case of Emily and her grandfather* demonstrates. SB 1003 increases the vulnerable populations – in your state and others; tutors family members to embrace the killing of their loved ones; and eliminates guardrails erected to protect them. You become complicit in the deaths of many, and the corruption of more. Please do not endanger more patients and their families. Please reject SB 1003.

*The name and relationship have been altered to protect the identities of the persons involved. The event is real.

Thank you,

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