

Submitter:

Dr. Leah Swartwout

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1003

Dear Senators-

I am writing to ask you to vote "NO" on SB1003. There are several provisions within it that I object to.

1. This law changes the 15 day waiting period to 7 days. Many terminally ill patients have strong emotions when faced with a health setback. As someone diagnosed with cancer my emotions after initial diagnosis varied from fatalistic "just give up" to mourning for future milestones to resolving to survive. Often within a few hours. My patients do the same thing. If the waiting period is so short they may opt for assisted suicide with a poor understanding of the actual problem.

For example, I have a patient diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer who initially might have chosen assisted suicide. But there are new treatments for cancer that patients don't always know about, with many fewer side effects. 7 days is not enough time to understand and come to terms with a diagnosis and complicated treatment options. They chose immunotherapy and lived an astounding 5 years with minimal side effects from immunotherapy, buying a new home, retiring, and vacationing. This person is not alone. I have many patients like this. Please give our parents, children and grandchildren the space to make truly informed decisions.

2. The requirement to disclose in writing and post the option of assisted suicide adds a barrier to care for my already marginalized minority patients. Many of my minority patients are suspicious that providers will give them poor care or passively let them die because of atrocities committed over the years. They are afraid that in the hospital providers are not being honest in end of life decisions about futility of care or turning off the ventilator. Please do not add fuel to the fire.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dr. Swartwout