

## OPPOSITION STATEMENT HB933

End of Life Option Act

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Words cannot express how strongly I oppose HB933.

My father suffered emotionally, psychologically, and physically at the hands of his father. In spite of the trauma of his childhood, he pursued his talents and opened a business. He met my mother and started a family. Underlying this outward success, my father battled depression and alcoholism. For a time, we experienced the loving father and husband my dad was meant to be. However, by middle school, alcoholism and depression controlled his life. He lost his business and was increasingly violent. My mother worked one job, then two, then three. My siblings and I began working when we were of age and contributed. Due to my father's violence, the police were called to our home many times over the years. He sought treatment several times with no success. The trouble with treatment back then is that it did not address the psychological underpinnings of the alcoholism and depression.

Finally, in October of 1986, my father took an industrial strength electrical cord and hung himself. My memories from that day are still vivid.

Some might say we were lucky to no longer have to deal with the chaos of a violent, alcoholic father. They'd be wrong. We wanted our father to get effective treatment. That suicide opened a pandora's box of emotional trauma. **Suicide is not a solution.**

Alcoholism is treatable. Depression is treatable.

Suicide is not a cure for depression. Suicide is not a cure for alcoholism. Suicide is not a cure for pain. Suicide is not a cure for anything.

Another point about my father's suicide is that suicide already happens every day without a law prescribing how to do it. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), in 2021, there were over 48,000 suicides which breaks down to **132 suicides per day**. (See Suicide Fact Sheet)

Do not normalize suicide by passing this bill. Do not turn suicide into some kind of healthcare choice. Killing yourself is a result of despair, not a decision of a healthy mind.

There are millions of people in healthcare dedicated to helping those who are suffering whether it is emotional, psychological or physical pain. **Do not turn these professionals into executioners.**

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In contrast, I cared for my mother during her battle with cancer. She was bedridden for the last 3 months of her life. The cancer had spread to most of her body and she required total care. Although I had 2 toddlers and was pregnant with our third child, it is something I am grateful I was able to do. Her pain was well managed. The last weeks of her life she was prescribed morphine drops because she had difficulty swallowing. Although she was in pain, my mother started refusing the morphine. She stated, "I don't want to sleep my life away. I would rather have pain and spend time awake with my family." Her desire to live remained strong even though she knew she was dying. Although I was pregnant and had 2 toddlers at the time, my mother was never a burden.

The American Clinicians Academy on Medical Aid in Dying has put out a manual on Assisted Suicide, *Medical Aid in Dying, A Guide for Patients and Their Supporters* (<https://www.acamaid.org>). While it is supposed to be a positive guide for assisted suicide, it reveals the unpleasant reality of this prescribed death. Between the barbiturates, the anti-emetics and the analgesics, the prescription can be as much as 100 pills. The length of time it takes to die varies from one person to another. **Death can take hours or even days.** No one can say for sure if death is pleasant because the person is dead. Once the person is dead, they cannot report on their death or whether or not they voluntarily took the medication.

Many proponents of Assisted Suicide express fear of pain or fear of suffering. Fear is not a good reason for suicide. There is no good reason to encourage suicide. That's cruelty.

This bill is not compassionate. It is the opposite. When our fellow human beings are suffering, they need appropriate treatment for what ails them along with emotional support and reassurance.

I urge you to promote compassion and appropriate treatment for those who suffer and turn away from this inhumane bill for assisted suicide. I ask you for an unfavorable report on **SB845**.