



## **Massachusetts League of United Latin American Citizens**

Senator/Representative  
Maryland Statehouse  
Baltimore, MD

March 2023

### **Re: Massachusetts Chapter of Nation's Largest and Oldest Latino Civil Rights Organization (LULAC) Strongly Opposes Physician Assisted Suicide**

Dear Honorable Senator/Representative:

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) State of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts chapter of our nation's largest and oldest civil rights volunteer-based organization, wishes to encourage your opposition to the twin assisted suicide bills – SB0845/HB0933. We are asking that you join with us in the fight for equal human dignity and healthcare access, because assisted suicide puts everyone, including the most vulnerable, at risk of deadly harm. LULAC State of Massachusetts empowers Hispanic Americans and builds strong Latino communities; and has historically been at the forefront in opposing Assisted Suicide (AS) laws, and therefore, we strongly urge you to oppose this legislation.

Throughout the years, in response to efforts by Assisted Suicide (AS) promoters, LULAC has democratically adopted at its annual national conventions powerful resolutions urging physicians, hospitals, legislators, and all stakeholders to oppose adoption of policies and/or legalization of Assisted Suicide. Please find attached the current National LULAC Resolution Championing Health Care and Opposing Physician Assisted Suicide.

However, LULAC urges the MD legislature to reject these bills, because every single supposed "safeguard" is unenforceable. Further, it is a gross distortion to claim Assisted Suicide laws add to autonomy when no universal right to care is established in our nation. Latinos face a myriad of health challenges and inequities, and now, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, are experiencing greater disadvantages due to lack of access to healthcare.

Our greatest concerns with Assisted Suicide include that no mental health assessment is required at any point in the Assisted Suicide request process despite major depression being a common experience with terminal illness. No declaration by any witness (especially a financially non-interested party) to the patient's ingestion of prescribed poison is required. Protections against elder abuse and foul play are eliminated without any opportunity for

investigation. No meaningful protections exist for culturally and linguistically diverse populations, particularly as Latinos or Spanish-Speaking remain grossly underrepresented in medical professions.

What's worse is that none of the aforementioned even takes into account bias, discrimination, or racism, whether latent or blatant, in our nation's health and other systems, which only further exacerbates these stark concerns

As an independent federal agency that advises the President, Congress, and state and federal policymakers, the National Council on Disability, states in their recent report on Assisted Suicide, "Legalizing assisted suicide means that some people who say they want to die will receive suicide intervention, while others will receive suicide assistance. The difference between these two groups of people will be their health or disability status, leading to a two-tiered system that results in death to the socially devalued group." Inequities and disparities in healthcare for people with disabilities and people of color remain a persistent problem.

In 2012, the Latino community of Massachusetts opposed legalization of Assisted Suicide by ballot referendum. Ultimately, the people of Massachusetts rejected legalization during that effort. Our Latino communities desperately need a right to medical care and equal access to it, and we strongly believe AS laws foreclose rather than advance either.

LULAC State of Massachusetts's programs, services and advocacy address the most important issues for Latinos, meeting critical needs of today and the future, and so we thank you for your consideration to stand with us in opposing AS, as a dangerous and inherently discriminatory public policy. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Grace Garcia  
Massachusetts LULAC State Director  
Member, LULAC National Board of Directors