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SB845 – Opposed

Life is Sacred at Every Age and Stage

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 845 which would legalize Physician Assisted Suicide. For more than 20 years our family has had the blessing of visiting nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and senior housing apartments to sing and converse with senior citizens. Many of these residents would be at risk of death by physician assisted suicide if Senate Bill 845 is passed. People who suffer can have an amazing impact on others. Our family members have experienced firsthand the joys of spending time with these senior citizens, many of whom are faced with serious health challenges. These senior citizens have inspired us by the strength they have shown in the way they cope with their suffering.

One time our daughter, Catherine, who was six years old at the time, told me she colored a picture for the “woman who loves me.” When I asked her whom it was for, she told me Ms. Shavon from the nursing home. When we took it to the nursing home to give it to Ms. Shavon, we told her Catherine said she made it for “the woman who loves me.” Ms. Shavon pointed to herself and said, “That’s me.” Months later we learned Ms. Shavon had died. Catherine told my husband and me that she wished Ms. Shavon did not have to go so soon. Catherine told us: “I feel like my life is a puzzle. I feel like a piece of the puzzle is missing.” The love that Ms. Shavon shared with Catherine during our monthly visits touched our daughter’s life to the point that our daughter felt like part of her world had gone when Ms. Shavon died. Our daughter made Ms. Shavon feel loved during her visits. Ms. Shavon shared love with our daughter. Although Ms. Shavon faced various hardships, her life had an amazing impact on our daughter and our family.

Our children learn important life lessons from the senior citizens they encounter during our regular visits. Our children distribute cards to the residents at the facilities. One time we went into one of the rooms, and the senior citizen had hung many cards we had given her over the past several months. The resident told us that when she gets out of the nursing home, she is going to put these cards in a binder and come back to the nursing home one day to give these cards to residents who are still living at the facility. From this resident, our children learned how important it is to be generous.

One of the residents of the nursing home was blind. Despite the challenges she faced due to her inability to see, this resident lit up the room with her smile. She enjoyed hearing the children sing, and the children learned from her that although she must cope with the difficulty of not being able to see, she can light up a room with her smile and her positive outlook on life.

Each month children made personalized birthday cards for residents, and we sang happy birthday to each resident who had a birthday that month. During one of our visits, we had the blessing of singing happy birthday to a senior citizen who turned 100 years old. Celebrating the birthdays of the senior citizens helps teach our children that life is sacred at every stage.

Instead of planning ways to end the lives of individuals who are faced with suffering, we need to stand beside people who are suffering and remind them that they are loved. We must always respect the dignity of others. Life is sacred at every age and stage.