

SB0443 Testimony

SB443 -written testimony 2/7/24

Andrea Campbell

Position- Unfavorable

Arnold, MD

There is the view that an individual who is not mobile (permanently wheelchair or in bed) has a fate worse than death.

I have visited Future Care for over a decade on monthly basis. There are many many persons who are permanently in a bed and without visitors. However, their lives have worth and Dignity. With this Bill, will staff or family easily persuade them that it's compassion to help them die? A disability should not be considered a suffering that requires suicide.

In a perfect world, someone asking for a physician to assist in their death would have a clear mind with no pressure to cloud their decision. We don't live in a perfect world.

Not everyone asking to die will be surrounded by compassionate family members.

They feel that they are a burden to their family anyway. The family may hint at this. They may believe they have a Responsibility to die. They may be in some stage of dementia. Individually, without their families, they make a decision that is not " truly informed.

Individuals will have the "option" to go to the pharmacy by themselves, go home alone and take 100 pills alone. Anti- nausea pills are needed because the prescription is poisonous to your body. Perhaps you don't die quickly, but have the impact of the poison. With no required medical assistance or doctor, will you die in fear and terror? Where is the dignity of dying alone in pain ?

You may believe you should not inform your family. They find you and are absolutely devastated. This is the kind of devastation that can tear up families for the next generation and cause imaginable sorrow.

Too many teenagers have committed suicide.

" My Mom and Dad helped my grandmother die, so why can't I try it ? " says the confused, overwhelmed teenager. One 'compassionate' death situation impacts not just one family, but many families, a community and state.

Once legislated, who will honestly tell the story of the the confused lonely person given a prognosis of terminal illness who has dementia and killed themselves alone?

The word compassion means to " Suffer Together or Suffer With" - not just give you the means to kill yourself alone.