

Euthanasia Prevention Coalition USA

Dear Senator

RE: Opposition to SB443: Assisted Suicide. Euthanasia Prevention Coalition-USA Registered Agent in Maryland

Besides points highlighted on this page, any supposed safeguards in SB443 are part of a deliberate bait-and-switch tactic by assisted suicide advocates to get a bill passed and then come back to amend it by gutting those safeguards. This was openly acknowledged by S.M. Sorrell, Executive Director of Massachusetts Death with Dignity, who was openly quoted on a similar bill saying, “Once you get something passed, you can always work on amendments later.”¹

Since 2020, there have been seven amendments to such laws across five states: in Oregon in 2020 and 2023; in Vermont 2022, and 2023; in California in 2022; in Washington in 2023; and Hawaii in 2023 and an amendment has been introduced in New Jersey. All these changes expand access, for example, waive waiting times, allow nurses to prescribe the lethal medication, or drop residency requirements.

Assisted Suicide reduces quality of care, disrupts trust in healthcare professionals, encourages suicide contagion, and harms the vulnerable.

All major groups representing disabled individuals are opposed to Assisted Suicide. A Federal study found that the nations assisted suicide laws are rife with dangers to people with disabilities.²

The American Association of Suicidology, on further reflection, have retracted an earlier statement implying that Assisted Suicide is somehow different from other suicides. The American Association of Suicidology (AAS) had to retract its 2017 statement that “Medical Aid in Dying” was not suicide, after it was used to justify expanding assisted suicide and euthanasia to disabled Canadians over the objection of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention.³

The Alzheimer's Association has terminated their relationship with Compassion & Choices. In 2020, the Alzheimer’s Association entered into an education agreement with Compassion & Choices.” In January 2023, as a patient advocacy group, they realized and “**deeply regret**” their **mistake** for failing “**to do appropriate due diligence.**” They realized that the values of Compassion and Choices are “**inconsistent with the Association**”. They apologized “to all the families who were hurt or disappointed” and **terminated** their relationship with the assisted suicide advocacy group, Compassion and Choices⁴

The UN opposes Assisted Suicide, citing the appalling historical record of State-sanctioned Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia. In 2021, the NY based United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of People with Disabilities asserted that all assisted suicide laws violate its Convention On The Rights of People with Disabilities.⁵

Constant evolution of Canadian policy demonstrates the inevitable expansion of Assisted Suicide: to both non-terminal and incapable patients; to children; to the incapable elderly; and to the disabled, including those for whom mental illness is the sole underlying condition.

The logic of legal Assisted Suicide accords a value to the autonomous wishes of a small suicidal minority, which is out of balance with the much larger scale of social harms created for a much larger number of people.

Sincerely,

Colleen E. Barry, Chairperson
Josephine L.A. Glaser, MD.,FAAFP
Meghan Schrader
Kenneth Stevens, MD
William Toffler, MD
Gordon Friesen
Alex Schadenberg

End Notes

1. **Comerford to reintroduce medical aid-in-dying bill in wake of court decision**
<https://www.recorder.com/SJC-Aid-In-Dying-Not-A-Protected-Constitutional-Right-49298186>
2. **A Federal study found that the nations assisted suicide laws are rife with dangers to people with disabilities.**
<https://www.globenewswire.com/en/news-release/2019/10/09/1927432/0/en/Federal-study-finds-nation-s-assisted-suicide-laws-rife-with-dangers-to-people-with-disabilities.html>
3. **Statement on recent MAiD Developments.** <https://suicideprevention.ca/media/statement-on-recent-mai>
4. **Alzheimer’s Association terminates agreement with Compassion & Choices:**
<https://www.alz.org/news/2023/alzheimers-association-statement>
5. **Disability is not a reason to sanction medically assisted dying – UN experts**
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/01/disability-not-reason-sanction-medically-assisted-dying-un-experts>