



512 10th Street, NW Washington, DC 20004-1401
(202) 626-8900 FAX (202) 737-9189 Website: www.nrlc.org

Tragic consequences of assisted suicide laws

Background:

Assisted Suicide is now legal in California, Oregon, Washington, and Vermont and may have some protection in Montana. Battles are raging in nearly every state legislature. These laws claim to offer just another medical option for competent terminally ill adults. However, this has NOT been the case in the states living under these dangerous laws.

Where legal, there have been documented abuses under these laws. In many states, there is a real risk that assisted suicide will expand to apply to the incompetent. Further, should the number of states legalizing assisted suicide continue to grow, the U.S. Supreme Court may readdress euthanasia as a constitutional right.

Talking Points:

- With proper care, nearly all pain can be treated medically.
- There is nothing to stop the government from steering you to inexpensive suicide versus treatment.
 - Under a nearly identical law, cancer patients Barbara Wagner and Randy Stroup's own doctors recommended treatment, but Oregon's Health Plan denied their request and reminded them of a suicide option.
- Everyone knows someone who has been misdiagnosed or outlived a terminal diagnosis.
- Depression leads some to seek suicide, but depression is treatable. Nothing in this act requires screening for mental health.
- Your family member could die from taking lethal drugs and you wouldn't know about it until he/she is dead because no family notification is required in advance.
- Who benefits from assisted suicide?
 - Medical insurance companies save money and will pay for cheap suicide drugs.
 - Heirs, who can inherit more money sooner, can be involved in the suicide.
 - Assisted suicide is a recipe for elder and disability abuse because it puts lethal drugs in the hands of abusers.

Deceptively titled "Death With Dignity Laws" are simply too dangerous for you, your loved ones, and vulnerable groups.