



FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS CATHOLIC DAYS AT THE CAPITOL

ASSISTED SUICIDE SB 1800 (Rader)

Oppose assisted suicide in Florida.

BILL PROVISIONS:

SB 1800 establishes a process through which persons can obtain drugs with which to commit suicide.

BACKGROUND:

While Florida law prohibits assisted suicide, the deceptively named “Death with Dignity” movement has targeted Florida as a priority state to change our laws to allow a patient to actively end their own life.

Florida statutes impose criminal responsibility on those who assist others in committing suicide. Section 782.08 provides that “every person deliberately assisting another in the commission of self murder shall be guilty of murder.”

The Florida Supreme Court upheld this prohibition in *Krischer v. McIver* (1997). In *Krischer*, a patient with a terminal condition sought a lethal dose of drugs from his doctor to end his life. The Court determined that the state’s interest in preserving life, preventing suicide and upholding the dignity of the medical profession outweighed the patients’ right to privacy.

RATIONALE:

Assisted suicide should be opposed because:

- **Exploitation of vulnerable persons** – The availability of assisted suicide empowers others to pressure and exploit older, weaker, more vulnerable persons.
- **Terminal diagnoses are often wrong** – Diagnoses of terminal illnesses are based on statistical averages and are often wrong, leading people to cease treatment.
- **Lack of psychological screening** – The bill does not require psychological screening or counseling for depression, which often prompts suicidal thoughts.
- **Financially exploitive** – As insurance companies and governments seek to reduce health care costs, they are incentivized to promote inexpensive assisted suicide over much more expensive advanced care.
- **Contagion effect** – Research indicates that legalizing suicide undercuts suicide prevention efforts can lead to higher overall suicide rates.

SUPPORTERS' LIKELY ARGUMENTS AND RESPONSES:

ARGUMENT 1: This bill will relieve the needless suffering of individuals.

RESPONSE 1: The bill allows assisted suicide for any individual diagnosed with a terminal illness, whether or not that illness causes physical suffering. An entire spectrum of advanced illness care is available for those suffering painful illnesses.

ARGUMENT 2: This bill allows people to “die with dignity”, without fear of losing their mental or physical capacities.

RESPONSE 2: Interest in suicide is a strong indicator of depression or other mental pathology and is a call for help. This bill does not require a psychological or psychiatric evaluation. Suicide is not an appropriate treatment for depression.

ARGUMENT 3: It can reduce the overall financial burden on the family.

RESPONSE 3: This bill provides no meaningful protections from coercion or abuse. Financial pressure, whether by family members, government, or insurance companies can turn the “right to die” into the “duty to die.”

SPONSOR AND CO-SPONSORS:

SB 1800 – Sponsor: Rader; Co-Sponsors: None

STATUS:

Referred to Health Policy; Judiciary; Rules

***For additional information, please contact:
Ken Kniepmann, Associate for Health
kkniepmann@flaccb.org, (850) 205-7207***