Six months to live?

- The law would allow a person to choose suicide if he or she has a prognosis of six months or less to live.
- We know from research and experience that these predictions can be wrong. Patients often outlive their prognosis by months or even years!

Treatable Depression?

- Mental health professionals argue strongly that the majority of suicides caused by untreated depression or other mental illness could be prevented with the right therapeutic intervention.
- The stress and turmoil caused by a difficult medical diagnosis can understandably trigger a depressive episode – but this is treatable!
- The initiative petition on PAS does not require doctors to provide for a psychiatric evaluation before prescribing life-ending drugs.
- This opens the door for those who are suffering from depression or even temporarily overwhelmed to choose a lethal course of action.

Witnesses?

- Two witnesses need to say that the patient is “capable”, “acting voluntarily”, and is not being “coerced”.
- If a patient cannot communicate with his or her physician except through someone familiar with their method of communicating, another person may potentially affix the patient’s signature to a written request for the prescription.
- A person who stands to inherit the dying person’s estate, together with a stranger, can be witnesses to the patient’s “request”, and relatives need not be informed.
- The law does not require that the actual ingestion of the drug be witnessed, nor is there any requirement to record any witnesses who may be present at the death.

Informed Consent?

- The proposed law does not require that viable alternatives like palliative care and hospice care be offered as treatment options.
- Tremendous strides in palliative care research and practice over the past few decades have made it possible for patients to effectively manage pain and reduce suffering.

Cause of Death?

- When the patient dies, the death certificate must list the cause of death as the underlying illness, not the effect of the lethal drugs. This provision requires a public record to be falsified.
- This has serious implications for physicians and pharmacists!