

FIELD SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS

One specific flaw with the ballot question is that it has no safeguards against patients using the law for reasons other than pain. In Oregon, a state where assisted suicide is legal, a study proved that only twenty two percent of the people who applied for death with dignity were actually in pain (Emanuel). This means that over 75% of the people who wanted to end their lives were looking for a way out of something other than pain. Ben Mattlin, a person who struggles with chronic illness, argues that once a person is terminally ill, there are many factors other than pain that might contribute to them wanting to end their own lives. He talks about "that certain look of exhaustion in a loved one's eyes," indicating that some people might end their own lives to make a better life for their loved ones, a life free of constant care-giving (Mattlin). Mattlin also states that financial worries are a major reason some people might want to take their own lives.

As I mentioned before, the proposed law has several flaws. The first requirement states that the patient must be deemed mentally capable of making and communicating health care decisions. A patient who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness is very likely to also suffer from depression. In which case, any decision made will be greatly influence^d by their current state of mind; which like^s may suicidal patients, it's a depressing state of mind. It is a very slippery slope, and hasty decisions can be made based on current feelings, and not facts. I had a retired Force Master Chief once tell me, "Never make permanent decisions based on temporary feelings". Depression is treatable, and with the Physician assisted suicide law, the patient is not required to be seen by a psychologist, and if indeed the patient is depressed, he or she will not receive the required treatment.

I am concerned that this ballot question does not prevent a patient from ending their life early because of factors other than pain. I would like the next death with dignity act to prevent terminally ill people from ending their lives early as much as it can. Many people say that there are parts of this proposed law that assure no one would end their life for reasons other than pain, yet the only safeguard that I can find in the law is that the request of the patient must be “voluntary” (Galvin). But we can never know what truly motivates someone to die because we cannot read their mind. There are “subtle forces” such as “that certain look of exhaustion in a loved one’s eyes” that can persuade a sick person to end their life as argued by Ben Mattlin (Mattlin). Ben Mattlin is not terminally ill, but he struggles with an illness that makes him need assistance in his everyday tasks (Mattlin). He provides the perspective of an ill person and explains how easily they can be persuaded to end their life because of their fragile state (Mattlin). This persuasion does not have to be verbal; it can be the guilt a sick person feels over the sadness in their family member’s eyes or their family’s financial struggles because of this person’s illness (Mattlin). These arguments lead me to believe that many terminally ill people may not even be in pain at all. In fact, information gathered from doctors in Oregon proved that only twenty two percent of terminally ill people who decided to end their life claimed that they were in pain (Emanuel). If I am going to put my religious beliefs aside and vote for this kind of law, I want to be assured that the right people are getting what they need. I propose that doctors note any pain the patient is in when they first get the illness and any pain they feel as their illness progresses so that we may be assured that terminally ill people are not motivated by another factor. I do not want people to end their lives because of their emotions or financial issues. As I think about those people who suffer from pain, I come to another concern that I must address before I can support this kind of law and that concern is the end of someone’s life.