



Dear Friends in Christ,

At this time, S.B. 165 is being heard before the Nevada State Senate.

In a word, the bill allows a person over 18 years of age to request from a doctor a prescription to end his or her life, following a diagnosis of terminal illness and accompanied by the opinion of two physicians stating that the person has less than six months to live.

This legislation designed to end the life of a patient is being billed as "medical treatment."

Most people in our society, regardless of their faith background, realize that prevailing on doctors to prescribe lethal medications is in direct conflict to a doctor's duty to "do no harm" and to treat the ill and vulnerable to the best of their ability.

In other venues where assisted suicide has been legalized, the case for assisted suicide has been expanded to include depression, mental illness, non-lethal illness and the financial burden of medical treatment. The poor are particularly vulnerable to the prospects of this reality.

Today, doctors have at their disposal incredible medical remedies and technology to address and alleviate pain and suffering associated with the dying process. By contrast, assisted suicide proposes to painlessly and easily end the suffering leading up to death, a final resolution which in itself denies ethical options for end of life treatment.

The purpose of palliative care is to provide as much comfort as possible to enable patients to face their transition from life to death.

In spite of the fact that palliative care is widely available, assisted suicide is being proposed as a means to painlessly and easily end the suffering leading up to death, a proposition that is ripe for abuse and can lead to negative consequences for the most vulnerable of our communities.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has stated, "Respect for life does not demand that attempts to prolong life by using artificial treatments that are ineffective or unduly burdensome. Nor does it mean that we should deprave suffering patients of needed medications out of a misplaced or exaggerated fear that they may have the side effect of shortening life." Effective palliative care allows the patient to devote time to the unfinished business of life, to arrive at a sense of peace with God, loved ones and with his or herself.

There are few experiences more difficult than watching a family member or friend undergo the pain associated with the dying process. Questions of pain and suffering, soaring medical expenses, a desire to maintain control and dignity and the sincere desire not to be a burden on our family presents real, difficult and challenging concerns.

Legalizing suicide is not a solution. In the face of these challenges, we should support and accompany our loved ones with genuine compassion, not with the false compassion of assisted suicide.

Therefore, I express in the strongest possible terms opposition to S.B. 165 which proposes to legalize assisted suicide in the State of Nevada. I urge you to go to the legislative website and to register your opposition at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Opinions/80th2019/>. Enter "SB165" in the box and click on "against." You will be asked for your name and address to verify your district. Or, call your legislator 775.684.1400 and voice your concern.

Asking God's abundant blessings upon each of you, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ

Most Reverend George Leo Thomas, Ph.D.
Bishop for the Diocese of Las Vegas