

F A C E O F F

Assisted suicide not dignified

CHRISTINA MCFARLAND
Staff Writer

Dying with dignity, or so they call it; personally, I don't see how being euthanized like a dog is anything close to dignified.

Doctor-assisted suicide has been heatedly debated ever since I can remember. Suffering elderly patients and their loved ones have been fighting for the "right" to take their own lives through fatal doses of doctor-prescribed drugs. Right now death by doctor prescribed drugs is legal in Oregon; however, death by lethal injection administered by another person, usually a doctor, is illegal. The line between the two is a fine one.

According to federal law, suicide is illegal; however, it is unpunishable, obviously. Why shouldn't assisted suicide be illegal also? I understand that these people are enduring tremendous amounts of suffering and pain, but everyone can't go around playing God. We were not meant to possess the ability to determine our fates by choosing our time of death. According to author and phi-

losopher Francis Schaeffer, events follow a certain pattern. If one exception, or allowance, is made others will follow. If those over the age of 85 struggling with a fatal disease become legally allowed to commit suicide, who's to say middle-aged adults suffering from cancer can't? What about teens with AIDS, or the mentally and physically handicapped? Others who are suffering will soon demand that they also have the right to assisted suicide.

Where will it stop? How are we to establish the requirements that make one eligible for doctor-assisted suicide? Does the applicant have to be over 85, struggling with disease, or simply depressed due to the recent loss of a loved one? Who is going to establish these limits? The restrictions made will be pushed, according to Schaeffer's theory. Perhaps they won't today, but they are bound to be tested later down the road. This spiral of negative events is bound to lead even further "downhill." Doctor-assisted suicide should be made illegal in Oregon to prevent this downward spiral from continuing.



Assisted suicide already decided

ELISABETH MEYER
Staff Writer

Since classical times, thinkers have debated the ethics of suicide. I consider the debate fascinating and suspect we'll never reach a consensus. The issue of assisted suicide is far too complex to adequately address in a few paragraphs, but even without attempting to examine personal views on the subject, we can recognize that Oregonians have drafted, approved and successfully defended a law designed to empower the terminally ill. Period.

Oregonians fought for the privilege of voting on this issue in 1994. In 1997, we voted down a measure aimed at removing the law by an astonishingly large margin, 60 to 40 percent. If we approach the current events from a purely legal standpoint, this is a clear issue of state's rights versus federal control.

Since Reno ruled that the Death with Dignity law did not violate the Controlled Substances Act, Oregon voters can only interpret Ashcroft's reversal of her decision as an arbitrary and highly political way

to block a law he has ideologically opposed for years. Whether you agree with Reno or Ashcroft's decision, it is democratically indefensible to allow one person to make the call.

In contrast to Ashcroft's action based on personal beliefs, Senator Ron Wyden opposed the measure in 1994, but has since fought for the law at a national level because he feels he must do so to represent the will of Oregonians.

If America as a nation truly opposes the idea of doctor-assisted suicide, why has the country failed to make illegal? The Supreme Court has ruled that while the Constitution does not protect a citizen's right to assisted suicide, it is a state's prerogative to make the act legal. The time-honored method of annulling a statute—namely passing a federal law in Congress—has failed twice. But the majority of Oregonians have made it clear they want doctor-assisted suicide legalized.

The rights of Oregon voters transcend personal views—even the personal views of the attorney general.

What are your thoughts on Oregon's assisted suicide law?



Jeff Nye

Major: Business

"That's a hard one because there's different reasons assisted suicide is good."



Steve Griffith

Major: Psychology

"I can see why we'd want it and why we wouldn't...because of what my grandma's going through, it's a case by case basis."

Photos and quotes compiled by Salena De La Cruz and Maggie Jirasek



Jeremiah Beckert

Major: Business

"I think if they're suffering they should be able to end their own lives and not have someone decide for them."



Dasha Wakefield

Major: Business/Marketing

"I don't think it's bad, but I can see how some people are frustrated...It's their life or the death."



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