

**New Jersey Assembly
Judiciary Committee Hearing**

Chair: Deputy Majority Leader Annette Quijano

Vice Chair: Joseph A. Lagana

Arthur Barclay

Michael Patrick Carroll

Gordon Johnson

Carol A. Murphy

Erik Peterson

March 12, 2018

Committee Room 11 4th Floor State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

Bill: A1504

Aid in Dying-Terminally Ill Act.

AJU 2/1/2018

Dr. Patricia A. Sayers DNP RN

Introduction

Good afternoon Deputy Majority Leader Annette Quijano, Vice Chair Joseph A. Lagana, Committee members, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to address (before this Assembly) the Bill: A1504 entitled the “Aid in Dying -Terminally Ill Act”. I speak to you today as a NJ voter who is a doctorally prepared nurse educator teaching full time in a NJ State University, School of Nursing. Past highlights of my career include the honor of serving as a US Air Force Nurse during the final days of the Viet Nam War, consulting hospital nurses across this nation and in Canada, and currently serving as an elected NGO representative to the United Nations and UNICEF on behalf of one of four UN NGO international nursing organizations. Within my capacity as a UN NGO representative my present efforts align with a co-international Board member who serves as a representative to the World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland. Furthermore, I have discussed nursing care of the dying with nurses now administering care, in particular, in Belgium, India, and the Far East. As an international nursing representative, I can attest, that the matter of acceptable healthcare modalities for aiding the dying-terminally ill is of critical concern to nurses in New Jersey, our wonderful nation, and on every continent. Please note that nurses are in the front line of terminal care delivery across the globe.

Attached for your reference is a composite of the beliefs/values of NJ residents that pertain to the subject of physician assisted suicide. According to a recent Pew Research Center Report (2017) more than 60% of NJ residents are members of religious denominations that highly oppose physician assisted suicide. Leading healthcare professional organizations position statements opposing physician assisted suicide are attached. In addition, I urge the Committee members to read the text *Physician Assisted Suicide in Belgium: Lessons Learned*. Now may I share my position.

My Recommendation to the NJ Judiciary Committee

RIGHT NOW, become “Champions for Life” and today win the hearts, minds, and votes of an awakening State of New Jersey and Nation. This can happen because this testimony I’m about to provide and the testimony of several others plus their evidence, will be shared online nationally and internationally to an audience that is waiting for the outcome of these proceedings.

Furthermore, the evidence I’m about to present clearly states why this Committee can and should lead an historical charge to inform and to influence those who otherwise may commit suicide or be terminated. Why and how this Committee can lead an historical charge for life follows.

Suicide is plaguing our nation. Attached is the most recent cause of death ranking compiled by the Center for Disease Control and Protection. Age spans factored include 10-14, 15-24, 25-34, 35-49, 45-54, 55-64, and all ages combined. Next to accidental injury and malignant cancers, the leading cause of death for children 10-14 in the USA is currently SUICIDE. For ages 15-24 and 25-34 next to accidental injury, the second leading cause of death in the USA is SUICIDE. Again, let me state that next to accidental injury, the leading cause of death among our young from ages 15-34 in America is SUICIDE. For ages 35-44 following accidental injury, malignant neoplasm, and heart disease is SUICIDE. As we all know, too many of our nation’s veterans have been and are today, as we speak, committing SUICIDE.

Committee members, New Jersey children, youth, and young adults are choosing SUICIDE! Our valiant NJ veterans are committing SUICIDE. Now this NJ ASSEMBLY's JUDICIARY COMMITTEE is asked, Will NJ ASSIST SUICIDE?

You don't discourage SUICIDE by ASSISTING SUICIDE.

Turn this discussion into beginning a movement to Champion Life for NJ residents and their families. Cast away SUICIDE. Let it go out over the press this afternoon, that after reviewing the scourge of SUICIDE among our youth, adults, and elderly it's time to take SUICIDE off the discussion table. Today let the NJ's Judiciary Assembly Committee agree to lead the charge against the plague of SUICIDE. Let the record show that Annette Quijano, Joseph Lagana, Arthur Barclay, Michael Patrick Carroll, Gordon Johnson, Carol Murphy, and Eric Peterson will lead NJ's fight against suicide and invite Judiciary Committees across our land to do the same.

Let it be known that NJ will comfort its suffering and dying and not assist their SUICIDE. Let NJ openly question the subtle message to our youth, middle aged, and elders that you can link integrity with SUICIDAL ACTS. Let it be known that if you are a NJ resident, you are wanted. If you are a NJ resident, you are respected. And if you are a New Jersey resident, you are loved.

THE TIME IS RIPE. SUICIDE IS BADLY HURTING OUR SOCIETY. OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS AWARENESS OF SKYROCKETING INCIDENCE IN SUICIDES HAS LEFT OUR NATION'S CITIZENRY STUNED. FURTHERMORE, PERSONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS ONCE HELD AT BAY, ARE BEING REMARKEDLY UNLEASHED IN BOTH SPEECH AND IN THE VOTING BOOTH. THESE RECENT TURN-ABOUTS WERE NOT PLANNED NOR ANTICIPATED AND ARE INTENSIFYING ALMOST DAILY.

**CONCLUSION:
SUICIDE IS NOT A THERAPY FOR PAIN AND SUFFERING
SUICIDE IS SUICIDE!**

When one suffers, palliative care is available. Palliative care science continues to advance. **Champion Life!** Patient centered hospice care for the terminal suffering can be offered. Hospice care strives to comfort while neither artificially extending life nor hastens death. **This is Championing Life!**

Please, refer to the attached 1) American Medical Association (AMA) Position Statement, 2) the recent AMA Position Statement comments, and 3) the American Nurses Association Position Statement regarding physician assisted suicide. Of interest is that not too long ago, the AMA faced with the possibility that the national thinking and mood toward accepting assisted suicide would require a change in their long term stance. For this reason, the AMA reached out to the medical community and did a re-evaluation of the overall situation. The recent result was that the AMA reaffirmed its historical position! To the surprise of many and the contradiction of rumors, no changes in the AMA's long standing position were made- none!

Position Statements: Physician Assisted Suicide

The American Medical Association rejects SUICIDE as therapy & rejects SUICIDE assistance
The American Nurses Association rejects SUICIDE as a therapy and rejects SUICIDE assistance
Champion Life! I speak for my family, neighbors, friends, and future NJ generations.

Make NJ proud. Lead NJ and reject all forms of SUICIDE. SUICIDE IS SUICIDE.

Thank you, Dr. Patricia A. Sayers DNP RN
A proud long time New Jersey resident and voter

Reference

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