

As Colorado Legalizes Assisted Suicide, Don't Be Conned by the Agenda of Death

Campaign season 2016 is officially over. As I sat in stunned elation watching the last of the presidential returns filter in during the wee hours of the morning, my heart was also broken.

While we as a nation voted in the most pro-life platform in history, Colorado also voted to allow physician-assisted suicide. Joining five other states that have legalized this practice, the tragic choice by Colorado voters reflects how our nation is quick to devalue life and deny that suffering has meaning.

The same thing is happening here in the District of Columbia where I live. I sat in crushed silence on Nov. 1 in the D.C. Council chambers as a bill legalizing physician-assisted suicide passed the first reading. Two days ago, it passed the second reading and now goes to the desk of Mayor Muriel Bowser for her signature.

Both votes were 11-2, with those voting in favor claiming that they hadn't heard much of anything from people who were opposed to it. Nothing could be further from the truth.

A vocal coalition, #NoDCSuicide, spent time reaching out to each member and their staffs. While most council members would not be bothered to meet with us, staffers corralled us in the hallways outside their offices. They let us know that their mind was made up and not to confuse them with the facts—or the stories of our own lives.

All of this comes together in the perfect storm for people like me, who live with a disability or chronic illness daily.

Fortunately, no one has tried to convince me that I'm a burden, either outright or subtly. The same cannot be said for many others across the country.

Now that it has become acceptable, preferable even, to end a person's life who requires care rather than act according to medical ethics, there is a documented rise in the abuse of elderly and other vulnerable people in the states where this travesty is legal.

It's a short hop from voluntary to mandated euthanasia, as health care costs continue to skyrocket and people become self-absorbed to the point of not wanting to deal with anything that inconveniences them.

What an abuse of democracy, when government officials tell citizens who elected them that they don't care what we think! But D.C. City Council members, like other elected officials nationwide, are not being honest about backroom deals. They're going to do what they've been paid to do—but not by taxpayers.

Paid? Yes. Paid. Remember the story of Brittany Maynard, the woman who chose to utilize physician-assisted suicide? Her story was splashed all over the media, from *People* magazine to major nightly news programs. Remember the movie *Me Before You*? Such a fictional story is acclaimed widely, while the true stories of Terri Schiavo and Jeanette Hall often go untold.

The Hollywood film and Maynard's story are just two examples of how Compassion and Choices, a special interest group funded in part by liberal billionaire George Soros, is using its vast resources to push an agenda that looks good on the surface but is sinister when you get past the polish.

The funds made from telling those stories are then poured into campaigns of people running for office who might be sympathetic to the cause of "death with dignity." These stories make cowardly acts look heroic and glamorous. The

campaign contributions are held over the heads of candidates, and then elected officials, to further their agenda of death.

One question I've been asked repeatedly is, "What does it matter what anyone else thinks? It is that person's life to do with as they choose and they should have help to end it as painlessly as possible." The problems are numerous.

The laws being enacted do not have proper safeguards to prevent coercion of people who are elderly, sick or who have a disability. There are little or no conscience provisions for medical personnel who believe their Hippocratic Oath ("Do no harm") still matters.

The legislation emboldens insurance companies to deny palliative and even life-saving treatment, since the cost of the suicide prescription is so much lower. There are no mechanisms in place other than self-reporting to monitor the overall enforcement of the law.

Rather than talk about how we as a nation got to this point, we need to focus on what we're going to do with things as they stand. Those of us who believe life is sacred and suffering has a purpose must fight to stem the tide of these laws, to outplay a well-funded lobby in legislative battles that are going on at the state and federal levels.

Learn to pay attention to more than just the story. Pay attention to the motive for telling it and the facts behind it.

As children of the Most High God and freedom-loving Americans, we must promote a culture of life from conception until natural death. We must walk in the truth that God is the Author of Life and that all life is valuable, no matter what is being hurled at us from any source.

We must encourage one another to keep walking: to watch for signs of faltering, speak truth and—as Aaron and Hur did for

Moses in Exodus 17—uphold one another. If you know someone who is hurting or in a vulnerable position, reach out to them. Don't be afraid to sit with them in their suffering and ask what you can do.

Keep asking. Keep sitting. Keep loving. Those are the things that keep people going from one moment to the next. Don't try to have the answers or explain their pain to them or the purpose for it. That intensifies the suffering rather than alleviates it.

Oh, and hound your elected officials to fight for life! {eoa}

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