

California Judge Hands Pro-Life Group a Major Victory Over Euthanasia Law

One year ago, Life Legal Defense Foundation went to court to stop implementation of California's infamous End of Life Option Act, which it says "strips vital legal protections from patients who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness."

The pro-life legal defense organization stated in a press release that the law does not require patients who seek aid-in-dying drugs to undergo a mental health evaluation, even though the majority of individuals who receive a terminal diagnosis experience depression, anxiety and other treatable mental health conditions that could lead them to seek suicide. Another concern is that the assisted suicide/euthanasia law has encouraged niche clinics that only dispense prescriptions for the lethal drugs to spring up in the state.

"These physicians do not have any meaningful relationships with their patients apart from facilitating their deaths," the Life Legal statement reads. "Moreover, we have heard of numerous cases of individuals who have long outlived their terminal diagnoses.

"State-sanctioned suicide sends the message that some lives are not worth living. California law now pits the financial interests of health care providers, especially in cases where the provider and insurer are the same entity, against the needs of patients. We have heard of cases where insurance companies will pay for lethal drugs but not for life-prolonging treatment."

Life Legal attorneys appeared in court Friday to California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and the director of the California Department of Public Health, who had filed a motion

to dismiss the case. Following that hearing, the judge in the case denied their motion, meaning the case can move forward.

“The End of Life Option Act is a dangerous law that exposes vulnerable individuals to direct and indirect pressure to commit suicide,” Life Legal Executive Director Alexandra Snyder said. “Life Legal represents hundreds of physicians who are committed to walking through life’s challenges as advocates for their patients, yet who are concerned that those patients could succumb to pressure from family, insurers and other health care providers to cut their lives short.

“Today’s ruling is confirmation that our claims have merit and deserve a fair hearing.” {eoa}