

**CHOICE IS AN ILLUSION, A NONPROFIT CORPORATION**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Dore: “The bill is sold as assuring patient choice and control. The bill is instead stacked against the patient and a recipe for elder abuse.”**

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**Providence, RI** – Attorney [Margaret Dore](#), president of [Choice is an Illusion](#), which has fought assisted suicide/euthanasia legalization efforts in many states and now Rhode Island, made the following statement in connection with tomorrow's legislative hearing on a bill seeking to legalize assisted suicide and euthanasia in that state. **(H 7659, hearing Wednesday, 3/23/16, Rise of the House).**

"There is a bill pending before the Rhode Island House of Representatives, which seeks to legalize physician-assisted suicide, assisted suicide and euthanasia as those terms are traditionally defined," said Dore. "The bill describes these practices as 'hastening death,' but there is no requirement that a person be near death. Indeed, ‘eligible’ persons may have years, even decades, to live.”

Dore said, "The bill is sold as assuring patient choice and control. The bill is instead stacked against the patient and a recipe for elder abuse.” Dore elaborated, “The patient's heir, who will financially benefit from the patient's death, is allowed to actively participate in signing the patient up for the lethal dose. After that, no doctor, not even a witness, is required to be present at the death. Even if the patient struggled, who would know?” Dore concluded, “The bill creates the perfect crime.”

The bill seeks to legalize assisted suicide and euthanasia for people who are "terminal," which is defined as a doctor’s prediction of less than six months to live. In real life, such persons can have years, even decades, to live.

“Doctors can be wrong about life expectancy, sometimes way wrong," said Dore. "This is due to actual mistakes and the fact that predicting life expectancy is not an exact science. A few years ago, I was met at the airport by a man who at age 18 had been diagnosed with ALS and given 3 to 5 years to live, at which time he was predicted to die by paralysis. His diagnosis had been confirmed by the Mayo Clinic. When he met me at the airport, he was 74 years old. The disease progression had stopped on its own.”

Dore said, “The bill says that action taken shall not be construed as assisted suicide or mercy killing (euthanasia) for any purpose.” In Washington State, which has a similar law with similar language, this requires the death certificate to list a natural death. Dore continued, “The significance is a legal inability to prosecute criminal behavior, for example, in the case of an outright murder for the money. The death is natural as a matter of law. ”

“If the Rhode Island bill becomes law, there will be new lethal paths of elder abuse and exploitation, which will be legally sanctioned,” said Dore. “People with years, even decades to live, will be encouraged to throw away their lives. Even if you like the concept of assisted suicide and euthanasia, the proposed bill has it all wrong.”

For more information, see:

1. Margaret Dore, Legal/Policy Analysis of H 7659, prepared for the Rhode Island House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare, March 21, 2016. Memo available here: <https://choiceisanillusion.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/rhode-island-memo-03-21-16.pdf>  
Attachments available here: <https://choiceisanillusion.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/rhode-island-attachments-03-21-16.pdf>
2. Margaret K. Dore, "'Death with Dignity': What Do We Advise Our Clients?," King County Bar Association, *Bar Bulletin*, May 2009, <https://www.kcba.org/newsevents/barbulletin/BView.aspx?Month=05&Year=2009&AID=article5.htm>
3. Nina Shapiro, "Terminal Uncertainty: Washington’s new "Death With Dignity" law allows doctors to help people commit suicide-once they’ve determined that the patient has only six months to live. But what if they’re wrong?" *Seattle Weekly*, 01/14/09, available at <https://choiceisanillusion.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/terminal-uncertainty-w-o-ad.pdf>

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