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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dore: "Utah's assisted suicide bill, if enacted, will allow the perfect crime. The law will encourage people with years to live to throw away their lives."

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Salt Lake City, UT -- Attorney Margaret Dore, president of Choice is an Illusion, which has fought assisted suicide legalization efforts in many states, and now Utah, made the following statement in connection with a bill pending before the Utah Legislature. (HB 264).

"The bill has an application process to obtain the lethal dose," said Dore. "The process includes a written lethal dose request form with two required witnesses. One of the witnesses is allowed to be the patient's heir who will financially benefit from the patient's death."

"A central problem with the bill is that a person assisting a suicide can have his or her own agenda," Dore said. "For example, if the person will financially benefit from the patient's death due to an inheritance, he or she will have a potential motivation to be sure that the death goes through. This may or may not be consistent with the patient's choice."

"This central problem is exacerbated by bill provisions that strip away existing patient rights. Dore explained, "Under current Utah law, patients have a right to informed consent regarding treatment alternatives. Under the proposed bill, patients instead have the right to an 'informed decision,' which limits their right to information. More to the point, they have no right to be told about alternatives for cure or to extend life."

Dore said, "Another problem is that the bills allow someone else to speak for the patient during the lethal dose request process." Dore elaborated, "There is no requirement that speaking person be the patient's designated agent, for example, through a power of attorney. The person is merely required to be 'familiar with the patient's manner of communicating,' for example, that the patient communicates with a stutter. This is obviously not a sufficient standard for a life and death decision."

"After the lethal dose is issued by the pharmacy, there is no oversight," Dore said. "No doctor, not even a witness, is required to be present at the death. This creates the opportunity for someone else to administer the lethal dose to the patient without his or her consent. If the patient objected or even struggled, who would know? The bill allows the perfect crime."

"The bill seeks to legalize assisted suicide for people who are 'terminal,' which is defined as a doctor's prediction of less than six months to live," Dore said. "In real life, such persons can have years, even decades, to live. This is due to actual mistakes: The doctor evaluated another patient's test results. More typically, doctors are wrong because predicting life expectancy is not an exact science."

Dore concluded, "Utah's assisted suicide bill, if enacted, will allow the perfect crime. The law will encourage people with years to live to throw away their lives."

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For more information:

1. Legal/policy analysis of HB 264, which can be viewed at these links:

<https://choiceisanillusion.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/utah-memo-only-hb-264-07-12-16.pdf>

<https://choiceisanillusion.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/utah-attachments-only.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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About Choice Is An Illusion

A human rights organization, working to keep assisted suicide and euthanasia out of your state, and out of your life.