

**Euthanasia Prevention Coalition Symposium
Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada
Margaret Dore Speech Highlights**

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Introduction:

Washington State and Oregon

I am a licensed attorney, or lawyer, whatever term you want to use, in Washington state, USA, where we do have legal assisted suicide. And in the fine print, our bill, and all of the Oregon-style bills, also allow euthanasia. And that's because there's no requirement of self-administration. Oregon's law doesn't even use the word, "self-administer." [The other side's claim that it does, is] propaganda.

And Washington's law says "may" self-administer.

And then the big umbrella is, it's [the Oregon and Washington laws are] considered part of medicine. Well, who administers medicine normally? Do some of you out there have children? Have you ever administered medicine to your child? Okay. Well, that's the normal way to administer medication, is someone else can give it to you.

So unless there's a clear prohibition from someone else giving it to you, the way I read the law, it already allows euthanasia. It's just sold as assisted suicide.

Now, Alex and I were having a little discussion, you know, well, should we be so clear about that? [that the Oregon-Washington style bills already allow euthanasia] And I think we should and let people know as they're voting for these bills, like in New Jersey or wherever is next, that this [the bill] already has euthanasia hiding in it, and don't think you're just passing a limited law that's voluntary because you're not.

So that was supposed to be my introduction line, but I started talking. But I do that; I don't stay on task very well.

Choice is an Illusion

So I am also president of "Choice is Illusion." The reason for the name is ... whose choice [will assisted suicide/euthanasia] be? Your choice or the choice of someone else?

Under -- with the Oregon and Washington laws, the easiest thing to see is there's no oversight required at the death.

Two people can be there. One leaves alive; one leaves dead. What happened? [We] don't

know. ... and then the death certificate will say a natural death

Okay. So Choice is Illusion, the scope is international. It didn't really start out that way.... [I] have done substantial work in Canada, more so a few years ago. I was actually allowed to specially appear in the LaBlanc case

I have [also] worked on Carter, and I do have a few things to say about it.

I also wrote an expert witness affidavit for a South African case. The client gave my affidavit credit for their winning the case. I have appeared in, I think, 20 states, some of them repeats. I know a lot about how the [assisted suicide/euthanasia] laws work.

Statutory Interpretation

And part of the reason we have been losing -- and I would really urge all of you, especially with organizations, we need attorneys who are highly trained in statutory interpretation.

So I personally worked for the courts, and I also worked for the U.S. Department of Justice. And I got a lot of training in how to read a statute and the different rules that apply. So even if it [a proposed bill or law] looks like it says one thing, because of something else in the bill or the type of bill it is, it will mean something else.

And so that's what's been missing.

We should have never lost Oregon. Everyone still says it requires "self-administration" in Oregon. And I would invite you to all do a word search on [the Oregon] statute. It's not there. It's propaganda.

Support Organizations

I would encourage you to donate to my organization as well as to Alex's organization or anyone else that's appeared here today. We all need help.

[www.choiceillusion.org & www.epcc.ca]

Good News

So I have kind of prepared this as a pep talk. I thought it might be appropriate because things might seem bleak....

Okay. So I am going to start out with some good news.

Good news. This year, Utah, the state of Utah, the U.S., passed a new law outlawing -- making -- it's a felony to assist a suicide in Utah. So that passed this year.

Last year, the state of Alabama in the U.S. passed an act banning assisted suicide. Okay.

And two years ago, the state of New Mexico, in their court decision, overturned legal assisted suicide in New Mexico. Assisted suicide is no longer legal in New Mexico....

There's hope even in Canada. You just have to keep trying, okay?

The Lawyer Situation

[People] like my father, my parents, donated to Seattle University [Law School], which is a Catholic University. Other Catholics have donated to, say, Loyola or ... some of these other [Catholic] universities so that there would be lawyers that could represent Catholic viewpoints, including opposition to things like assisted suicide and euthanasia.

Well, those schools have been taken over, Compassion and Choices' legal director started teaching at -- what was -- started teaching at Seattle University like 20, 30 years ago. Their current lobbyist teaches a course on end-of-life ethics.

And, you know, if you donate to those schools, call up whoever is in charge and say you're not going to donate anymore and tell other people not to donate until they get rid of those lobbyists, because that's part of the problem.

[At legislative hearings, t] hey come in with experts. They have been doing this for years. Their points [which are largely false] are so polished.

And then what [have we] got? I might come in. I'm a volunteer.

[Basically, we have largely volunteers against a machine]

Oregon

It's -- you know, there's a reason we're kind of losing. I mean, we lost in Oregon. We should never have lost in Oregon.

There was no self-administration [in the bill's language], and that was [the other side's] big talking point [that the bill was safe due to self-administration being required and the term wasn't even in the bill.

And we didn't call them on it. Where were the lawyers? I mean gee whiz it wasn't even in the fricken bill and we missed it.

To the best of my knowledge, I was the first person on our side to notice that Oregon's law doesn't even use the term, like 10 years after the law was passed. We need lawyers like yesterday]

The Power of One

So I also wanted to talk about -- part of my pep talk is "The Power of One," and I was going to use the example of my parents, or my mom.

So when I was four years old, my sister died of what we now know is SIDS. [Sudden Infant Death Syndrome]

People didn't know what it was. Crib death or whatever you want to call it. And so she wanted to know why her baby died.

And so back then, you could look up -- in the newspaper you could find out actually people's addresses. So every day she would look at the obits, and if there was a baby that had died that was under six months old, she would call the person [parent] right up.

So she kind of -- after a little while she had a little parent group. She had this little constituency.

And then my father was a legislator. So that was one person. That was her. Okay? And then my father happened to be a state legislator, so he proposed a bill to have a controlled study, like an autopsy of every baby that fit a certain profile that was under six months [old]

And he thought he had the votes. Then he learned he was one short, this guy who he had thought would vote with him. And so he went to see him, and it turned out it was a person whose baby had also died. And so the guy didn't want his little girl cut up.

And so the two men cried, and my father got his vote. And the study went through. And through that, they still don't know what causes SIDS, but the incidence is way down.

They have a sleep-on-your-back campaign. I don't know if you have heard about that. That all arises out of Mary Dore [my mother] being upset and wanting to make a difference.

And so all of you, if you can just hang on, you know, it looks bad right now, but especially if you can get lawyers who really know statutory interpretation [we can win].

Selfish Arguments

And, also, what I try to do is use selfish arguments.

Okay. So if I am in front of a legislature, these are typically people who are middle class and above, or they couldn't have gotten elected. They wouldn't have time [or money] to be in the legislature. So they're at least the middle class and above.

They probably [have] a house, a car, a little money in the bank. And they're often 50, 60, 70 years old. And so I don't talk to them about vulnerable people because that's asking them to be altruistic.

I start talking to them about themselves.

So I am an elder abuse attorney. I have seen the terrible things people do at the end of life or ending lives to get the money. Getting the wills changed. I have done guardianship. I have seen it all, okay?

And so I start talking to them, like, how much do you trust your relatives? How much do you

trust your kids?

If this goes through, I mean, the way the bill works, the Washington and Oregon style bill works, you know, someone – the people that I have talked to, they sign up just in case [they want to use the lethal dose]. They are not necessarily intending to use it. It gives them comfort [to have it in the house]. That's one of Compassion & Choices' few true talking points.

So once it's in the house -- so, say, you know, Dad has got the bad news. Son suggested he gets the drugs. And so they're in the house and the son is back in his life or whatever.

And, you know, he goes -- so Dad goes to the doctor and is kind is surprised. His test results are better.

And so he comes back and tells his son, and his son is like, "Oh, Dad, oh, that's great. ..."
Because he's already been thinking about the remodel, you know, when his dad is gone. "So let's drink to that."

Drink No. 1, 2, 3, 4. We're pretty happy now. And now a special drink. Bottoms up, and Dad is dead. The death certificate will say whatever the illness was.

Good sister comes back, "I can't believe he died. I thought he got that great test result." Son responds, "Here's the death certificate, the cause of death was cancer."

The perfect crime. These bills allow legal murder. They allow the perfect crime.

And so all these decision makers like the justices [of] the Canadian Supreme Court, the voters [of Oregon and Washington State] have naively voted this in thinking it's voluntary, thinking that they're helping people. ...

The Carter Case

Let's talk about Carter real fast. And I have a handout that says Carter on it that was in the pile. Well, anyway, the thing is, Carter is based --

Ten minutes?

Carter is based on the right to life. All right? You already heard that? So what they [the Canadian Supreme Court Justices] did was they said that [we] have to allow euthanasia because if somebody wants to do suicide, they would have to do it when they're still able to -- healthy enough to kill themselves [which would make them have to kill themselves early when they still have good life left. So euthanasia must be allowed so that people are not forced to kill themselves early, if they're disabled, someone else can do it for them]

Okay. But that presumes that suicide is a right. There's no right. It's been decriminalized in Canada, but it's not -- I mean, if one of you right now would get out a gun and point it at your head, you know, the cops would come and take you in

So anyway, [Carter] it's based on a nonexistent right to suicide. That's the fatal flaw of the decision. It's the linchpin to the whole decision and it's B.S. So it just seems that that would be a simple little lawsuit. And if you got a little PR going and had your stories lined up, you know, or you never know, somebody else could come into power. You never know.

Like my dad when he was a politician, he lost -- he had a bad streak. He lost like [four or] five elections in a row. Attorney General he lost, Mayor of Seattle he lost. He lost his Senate seat. He lost -- there was one other one, I don't remember.

Anyway, then his friend got elected Governor and appointed him to a lower court. That kick-started his career again, and he ended up being the Chief Justice of the Washington State Supreme Court.

So right now you're down, but it's not over, okay?

How to Argue to Win

So I want to talk about how to argue to win. The first thing people have to know is we're not talking about people that are necessarily dying anytime soon.

So the easy way I do that is I hold up [a photo of] Jeannette, my friend: "This is my friend, Jeannette Hall [who got talked] out -- assisted suicide in Oregon 18 years go."

That gets their attention, okay?

I want to be talking about alive people. I do not talk about hospice. I do not talk about palliative care because that gives the image of someone [dying] in bed, and nobody wants to vote for that, okay?

So I'm saying something different than other people, and this is my experience. I have been in 20 states. I have been successful....

Why did we lose in Washington State?

Because we said, "Well, there's palliative care, so everybody [the voters] is envisioning sick people in bed. And we [the campaign] had pictures of kind [people looking down at sick or old people in bed or in a wheelchair.]

I mean, everyone tried. I'm not blaming anybody. [But, we did it and we lost and people on are side are still doing it and then we lose. What is the definition of insanity?]

Colors

I also tend to use green as a color. It's life. People can look at it.

It's kind of hard on legislators -- or if you have ever been a judge or something, when you have

got a whole room full of people with red stickers, I mean, after a while it just puts everybody on edge.

Choice

Okay. So the next thing they [decision makers] need to know is that it won't necessarily be their choice, which I guess I have already talked about. And they need to know that the bill [or law] is stacked against them. [Legal assisted suicide and/or euthanasia are] a recipe for abuse. [They're] a recipe for a lot of things.

The US Palliative Care Bill (S.693, H.R. 1676)

A little background on it. About -- I think it was in 2012, I read an article in the New England Journal of Medicine, and it was a doctor writing that, you know, doctors didn't want to have to kill their patients. And so she suggested that there be something like a killing "center" [so that doctors wouldn't have to do it]

Okay. So this new hospice bill allows palliative care centers -- centers.

And Compassion and Choices has started a new PR campaign saying that "aid in dying," which is a euphemism for euthanasia, is "palliative" [so that the proposed centers will thereby allow euthanasia]

It was a unanimous vote coming out of the U.S. [House of Representatives. Both versions of the bill are now in a US Senate Committee, the HELP Committee (Health, Education, Labor and Pensions)]

History Repeating Itself

Also, I am one of those people that used to read a lot of war stuff. So I read The Nazi Doctors by Robert J. Lifton, if any of you have read that. And in there, there's a very helpful couple of pages talking about how they [the German government] convinced the German population to accept euthanasia.

And I think it's very instructive so that we learn from that and we don't make those mistakes. They [the German government] kept it "medicalized," always had a doctor present.

So we don't -- if we can help it, we shouldn't talk about [assisted suicide/euthanasia] as a medical treatment unless we have to. Okay?

They also talked about how expensive some people were, and they talked about people being burdens. So we don't want to use the "B" word and say that people are burdens or that someone called me a burden.

And I know I'm going against what some of you have said today, but if you do that all you're doing is helping the other side, okay?

Because you want to get the conversation really narrow, focus on your 60-plus decisionmaker that this could be you, you know? ...

I stopped this bill in Connecticut just by saying something similar to that and pointing out how the death certificate would make it as a matter of law.

And I saw the sponsor put his hand on his head as the bill was going down. I mean, it just was that fast [five minutes? as I was speaking]

Don't Concede People Are Choosing

Okay. Oh, don't concede people are choosing. Like Brittany Maynard. That's how her husband pronounces it....

Did she choose assisted suicide? Two days ahead of time she's crying and ambivalent, right, if you watched the video.

And then after the fact we find out that her husband and her mother are fighting over the movie rights. Oh, looks just like a normal inheritance contest to me.

“Ending Lives”

Okay. Other things. Like instead of saying "end of life" care, "ending lives." ...

Have Your Own Theme of the Case

The other thing is like -- okay, so my dad was a trial lawyer, and you want to have your own theme of the case, okay?

So if it's a murder trial, you know, the prosecutor might say: “This was a murder, a heinous crime of jealousy and rage, he was already convicted once of assaulting her, you know, a big black eye or whatever, it was terrible, and this time he murdered her.

So if you're the defense, you want to have an actual defense that doesn't ring the bell of any of those horrible things.

So you might say something like, "This is a case of mistaken identity. And we're going to be -- in our case today, we're going to show he was in Canada that day. We have credit card receipts, and we have eyewitness testimony putting him in Vancouver. So he wasn't in Colorado -- or wherever the crime occurred. -- It wasn't him."

So just because the other side talks about pain and suffering, we don't have to do that, and shouldn't, because, you know, unless we're forced to. Because that's their case; their case is suffering.

[And their claim about suffering is also not supported by the Oregon statistics, which they produce. So, another fake claim on their part]

Don't Take on a Burden That You Don't Need to Prove; Control the Argument

So you only have to prove it's a bad bill [to defeat it]. And most of these cases it's a bill situation. You don't have to prove that all these other societal things need to be addressed or anything else. You just want to focus on your narrow thing....

In Washington state, one of the reasons we lost is we didn't handle the Catholic argument very well. ["Catholics want to impose their values on everyone else and/or make people suffer"]

And so it was used on me in Minnesota, I was in a debate, you know, held in the basement of a church. And so I got up, and I just did my two points:

We're talking about people who have years, decades to live, and it won't necessarily be your choice.

That was it. Your turn.

And then she says like:

Well, you know, there's something that hasn't been said here, the role of the church and blah, blah, blah. And Catholics want people to suffer, whatever.

So I just said back:

You know, there's a lot of Catholics here. There might even be some cafeteria Catholics, different kinds of Catholics. You know, but no matter who they are or how many there are or what kind they are, the bill is still going to say and do the same thing, so let's just get back to the bill.

Anyway, I won that debate because I didn't take on a burden I didn't need to prove. I didn't need to justify Catholic beliefs. I didn't need to do any of that. [I just needed to show that the bill we were talking about was a bad bill. By doing so, I controlled the argument and prevailed]

Catholic Churches Forcing Speakers to Take on a Burden that Gets the Speaker into Trouble (and Hurts the Church)

Now, what's been also a problem for me is sometimes, you know, I have been -- so in this particular debate, we made a deal with the Catholic priest that we would have a prayer at the beginning [of the debate] but that [he] would not give the Catholic position because that would bring in -- because that would put a burden on me. I would then have to defend the church, and everything the church has ever done wrong would all of a sudden come back to me.

But some of the other churches, when I have wanted to speak, they said, "Well, you have to talk about the Catholic position at the beginning of your [talk]" And I said, "I can't do that because ... that's going to make us lose." And it's been very difficult. So I don't know what the solution to that is.

MALE SPEAKER: “You're doing it. You're keeping it legal.”

MARGARET DORE: I mean, you just want to win, you know. And then once you win, then you can take care of these other things. Let's see.

MALE SPEAKER: We're down to two minutes (inaudible).

MARGARET DORE: ... I guess I did it all: www.choiceillusion.org Thank you very much.

(Conclusion of presentation)