California Catholic Conference Statement on Passage of Abx2-15

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Edward “Ned” Dolejsi, executive director of the California Catholic Conference, issued the following statement after the California Legislature passed ABX2-15, a bill that would legalize physician assisted suicide. The legislation passed out of the Assembly with just one vote to spare: “It is a sad reality and a sobering cultural commentary that an extraordinary session called to address a billion dollar hole in the Medi-Cal budget can pass an assisted suicide bill but can’t find a way to pay for primary care, second opinions, specialty cancer or end of life care for the 12 million vulnerable Californians who participate in the Medi-Cal program. “To its promoters, ABX2-15 is about compassion and choice. Where is the compassion when Medi-Cal won’t pay for pain relief but the Legislature responds by making physician assisted suicide ‘affordable?’ Where is the compassion when the Legislature takes painstaking steps to protect physicians from liability but doesn’t require an assessment by licensed mental health professionals before patients are given a lethal prescription? “And where is the choice when literally millions of Californians are told there is no coverage for second opinions or their cancer care, but look, we’ve made suicide an affordable option. Since when has it become either compassionate or good public policy to foster the idea that those at the end of life, that those with an understandable fear of suffering or dysfunction—especially people with physical or developmental disabilities—are or should be a burden to society and their families? “In the reality of our incredible social diversity we are challenged to provide care for each other not invite some to feel less than, or subtly invite them to consider severing the ties that bind us. “Pope Francis invites all of us to create our good society by seeing through the eyes of those who are on the margins, those in need economically, physically, psychologically and socially. “Looking through those eyes, ABx2 15 is bad law for California. We ask the governor to veto this bill.”

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