

Statement on Ruling Declaring End-of-life Option Act Unconstitutional from Executive Director of the California Catholic Conference

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The following statement is from Edward ‘Ned’ Dolejsi, executive director of the California Catholic Conference, on the ruling by a Riverside Superior Court judge that the End-of-Life Options Act is unconstitutional:

“We are encouraged by yesterday’s ruling by a Superior Court judge in Riverside County overturning the state’s assisted suicide law. Our opposition to assisted suicide is no secret, but this legislation was also opposed by a broad coalition of doctors, nurses, seniors and the disabled community, who fought this bill for many, many reasons,” said Dolejsi.

“Health care professionals were shocked at the cynicism and questioned why the state was embracing doctor-assisted suicide as the standard of care for people who needed respect and support. Others were offended at the way Medi-Cal patients – often refused coverage for palliative care – were offered coverage for lethal prescriptions instead.

“Still others were truly disturbed by the lack of safeguards to prevent seniors and the disabled from being railroaded into assisted suicide. At an oversight hearing in January to review the implementation of the End-of-Life Option Act, even though presented with clear evidence of poor data collection and other implementation uncertainties, legislators openly discussed ways that physician-assisted suicide could be expanded – especially to poor and minority communities.

“This was a bad law. We hope the court’s ruling is sustained. If this issue comes before the Legislature again, we hope they address the real issue in front of them—how do we protect the dignity and quality of life of those among us facing a serious or terminal illness, and how do we help our loved ones feel love and support as they contemplate the end of their life.”

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