

## Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 494

Dear Senator Burdick and members of the committee:

I am a Lake Oswego resident and voter in Senate District 19. I am writing in opposition Senate Bill 494.

Senate Bill 494 would legalize starving and dehydrating vulnerable Oregonians suffering from Alzheimer's, dementia, and even mental illness who are conscious and not terminally ill.

If passed, the bill will allow removing basic human care in the form of normal food and water from vulnerable people with dementia and mental illness. This is not about end-of-life care or extraordinary means. This bill targets non-terminal, conscious patients who have become inconvenient for insurance company profits.

Current statutes prevent the representative of a patient with Alzheimer's or mental illness from ordering food and water withheld. SB 494 removes those safeguards so water and nutrition can be withheld even if the patient did not indicate this desire in an advance directive and shows a desire to eat.

Furthermore, SB 494 deletes definitions from statute. This leaves huge areas of uncertainty about the meaning of terms and the authority of the patient's surrogate.

This bill offers little protection for Oregonians who suffer from non-terminal diseases that require long-term care. I urge you strongly to consider the serious ramifications of this bill for vulnerable Oregonians whose right to life must be protected by law.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Kathryn Hickok  
Lake Oswego