

I am writing to ask the Oregon Legislature to vote AGAINST HB 4135. This bill is not in the interests of the dying to determine for themselves what kind of end-of-life care they wish, whether directly or by the execution of their wishes through a third party, especially with regard to food and hydration. This kind of personal right cannot be legislated apart from the legal protection of individuals' dignity and right to state and have carried out their end-of-life wishes. For some, these wishes are based upon deeply held religious beliefs which the state has no right to overturn. There is no advantage to the common good if the *a priori* rights of an individual are cut out from under them by laws that undermine their personal human dignity. This is especially true for those who have no capacity to speak for themselves when they are rendered mute by the diseases which are bringing about their deaths. A trusted and legally authorized person, chosen by the individual, must be able to speak for the incapacitated, so they are not subjected to heartless and utilitarian laws that no longer hold their lives sacred. Material pragmatism is not one of America's nobler motivations regarding human life. It produces laws without faces or merciful recourse. A duly authorized advanced medical directive for end-of-life care is crucial to the protection of an individual's autonomy and independence in what are possibly the most vulnerable moments of a person's life when the ability to speak for oneself is deprived to them. Please vote NO on this dangerous and autocratic legislation that runs directly contrary to the liberty and justice defended by the earliest documents and attitudes of the American Republic.

Sincerely,  
Father L. Michael Pope, S.J.