

I'm writing in opposition to House Bill 4135, a bill whose primary purpose is to create a mechanism for increasing the rate of change to Oregon's advanced directive form, by creating an un-elected board whose only purpose is to propose periodic changes to the form.

End-of-life care is not an area in which the public is well served by a constant stream of legislative tinkering. Indeed, it's a subject that is too important to be delegated to un-elected bodies. Subjecting the output of the un-elected body to approval by the Legislature is simply not sufficient. Every Oregonian will one day die, so every Oregonian's very life will be impacted by this legislation, and so the Legislature must take full responsibility for every part of legislation of this nature.

Delegating the selection of board members entirely to a single person, the Governor, also ensures that the members of the board will represent a single point of view from a single political party. Minority viewpoints will not be represented, as they would in the work of the Legislature.

The goal of this un-elected board is clearly to create a mechanism by which to continually attempt to broaden the situations in which it is acceptable for health care providers to end patients' lives by intentional dehydration, from the four end-of-life situations defined under current Oregon law to additional situations involving quality-of-life, economic burden on family members, psychological well-being, or any of the myriad of other qualities which such a board will one day imagine.

This is legislating "from beyond the grave" so to speak. The supporters of this bill should consider whether they would support a bill to create an un-elected board whose only purpose is to periodically propose new limits on abortion.

Please do not delegate end of life care legislation to an un-elected board appointed by the Governor. Please vote against HB 4135.

Sincerely,

Tom Barreras
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