
Fatal Care, Death Upon Request

In June 1997 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state laws banning physician-assisted suicide do not violate the Constitution, so states may decide whether it is constitutional for a physician to help an individual to die.

In August 2019, CNN reported that physician-assisted suicide is legal in nine¹ U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Meaning, physicians cannot be prosecuted for prescribing medication to hasten death for terminally ill patients whose life expectancy is six months.

Beware! Downward Steps To Fatal Care for Anyone

Step One: Legalize the practice for the terminally ill, but soften the moniker. Formally known as euthanasia, currently, it's referenced as (a) physician-assisted death (PAD), (b) death with dignity, (c) aid in dying, (d) end of life option, (e) passive involuntary euthanasia, or (f) fatal care. Whatever its moniker, most of the nine states that have such laws allow government-approved licensed physicians to prescribe lethal drugs for patients to self-administer.

Step Two: From medical to psychiatric to “upon request.” In 2017 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) reported the expansion of euthanasia as follows: “People with non-terminal illnesses have been legally euthanized at their own request in several countries for nearly 15 years. This included certain eligible patients who have psychiatric disorders.”

Fatal Care in the U.S.A.

“The APA, in concert with the American Medical Association’s position on Medical Euthanasia, holds that a psychiatrist should not prescribe or administer any intervention to a non-terminally ill person for the purpose of causing death.”

– American Psychiatric Association, December 2016

For years, U.S. advocates have asked for the non-terminally ill, including psychiatric patients, to be considered eligible for physician-assisted death as a means of non-discrimination. *PBS Frontline* reported that Final Exit Network *helped psychiatric patients commit suicide* by using helium-mask techniques. That occurred in Cumming, Georgia in 2008.

Final Exit Network (FEN) in Georgia: After FEN instructed John Celmer, age 58, of Cumming, Georgia to buy a helium tank and a plastic “exit mask,” he obeyed, buying an “exit hood” and two tanks of helium. In June 2008 two FEN personnel went to his home to assist in his suicide. The exit hood was connected to the helium and put on Celmer’s head. His arms were held down as he died. He was told he would (a) lose consciousness within seconds, (b) die minutes after the mask was applied, and (c) FEN guides would remove all evidence.

Prompted by the 2008 assisted-suicide of John Celmer, 58 in Georgia, the GBI in 2009 executed a sting operation of FEN, which was incorporated in Georgia. The sting resulted in the arrest of two FEN officials. Subsequently, State of Maryland officials arrested the group’s medical director and a regional coordinator for authorizing member suicides.

¹ Mandated by Law: Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont, Washington and the District of Columbia.
Mandated by Court Ruling: Montana and California

Georgia Law Prohibits Assisted Suicide

The major difference between euthanasia and physician assisted suicide is who is killing the person in pain. Georgia law prohibits both.

Code Section 16-5-5(b) relating to assisted suicide: Any person with actual knowledge that a person intends to commit suicide who knowingly and willfully assists such person in the commission of such person's suicide shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor than ten years.

– H.B. 1114, Passed March 29, 2012, Signed by the Governor May 1, 2012

Previously passed H.B. 1114, now current law, prohibits assisted suicide, but authorizes palliative care, living wills, durable power of attorney for health care, advance directives for health care, written orders not to resuscitate, and consent for care as authorized by Georgia law. Related law passed as S.B. 109 on April 2, 2015 and was signed by the governor May 5, 2015. It clarifies the use of Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) forms, but bans assisted suicide as follows: “Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to authorize any act prohibited by Code Section 16-5-5. Any health care provider, health care facility, or any other person who violates Code Section 16-5-5 shall not be entitled to any civil immunity provided pursuant to this Code section.” [Code Section 16-5-5 prohibits assisted suicide.]

Proposed Legislation for 2020

S.B. 291 Georgia Death with Dignity Act, introduced January 15, 2020 by Senators Steve Henson and Nan Orrock, creates physician-assisted end-of-life options for terminally ill persons 18 or older, if their prognosis is six months or less to live and they are residents of Georgia.

Medical aid in dying means physician-prescribed aid-in-dying drugs to be self-administered. To get that prescription, an individual must voluntarily make two oral requests, separated by at least 15 days, and a valid written request to the attending physician. Written requests must have two witnesses, that cannot include a relative or an heir to the patient's will. However, requests may be rescinded. If death results from this procedure, the death certificate would list the underlying terminal illness as the cause. A form entitled, “Request for Medication to End My Life In A Peaceful Manner,” is included in this bill.

Insurance: Insurers cannot deny or alter health care benefits under a policy of sickness and accident for a terminally ill person covered therein.

Fatal care mandated in California hospitals. By 2017 the California Department of Mental Health had mandated state psychiatric hospitals to provide assisted suicide to its terminally ill. If the patient's outside physician can't be found, the hospital must provide fatal care therein.

Conscience clauses not honored in Belgium. A Catholic nursing home in Belgium was fined for refusing a physician entry to give an approved lethal injection to a resident.

In the Netherlands, lethal injections are the common fatal-care drug. Between 2008 and 2014 over 200 psychiatric patients asked for and received euthanasia. 66 percent of the patients cited “social isolation and loneliness” as the reason for requesting life-ending aid. Also, Netherlands Ministers of Health and Justice proposed to Parliament that the criteria not be limited to medical conditions, but be extended to average citizens who feel they have lived “completed lives.”

ACTION: Oppose Fatal Care. Call Health and Human Services Committee Senators Watson, Ch., 404 656-7880; Burke, V-Ch., 656-0040; Butler, 656-0075; Cowsert, 463-1266; Dolezal, 656-7127; Henson, 656-0085; Hufstetler, 656-0034; Jackson, 463-5261; Kirkpatrick, 656-3932; Ligon, 463-1383; Orrock, 463-8054; Unterman, 463-1368; Walker, 656-7454.

Gun Laws, Proposed Amendments

S.B. 281 Georgia Firearms and Weapons Act, introduced by Senator James January 15th would prohibit the possession of automatic and semi-automatic guns, subject all transfers or purchases of firearms at gun shows to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and require firearm inventories to be secured or stored when the dealer is not open for business.

Current law would be changed as follows: “No person shall have in his or her possession any sawed-off shotgun, sawed-off rifle, automatic or semi-automatic gun, large capacity magazine, dangerous weapon or silencer except as provided in Code Section 16-11-124.” The underlined words are the proposed amendment and, if passed, the preceding sentence would become law.

Unlawful possession of firearms or weapons would include automatic or semi-automatic guns and large capacity magazines. Violators could be sentenced to five years in prison.

In addition to current restrictions, anyone convicted of carrying an automatic or semi-automatic gun in a school safety zone, at school functions, on a bus or other transportation could be sent to prison for five to ten years and fined \$10,000.00.

This bill does not apply to police officers, certain governmental agents and employees, members of the National Guard, army, navy, marine corps, air force, or coast guard, if on duty. Gun show vendors would be required to comply with National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NCIS) conditions for transfers or purchases of firearms, but vendors would be allowed to contract with a licensed dealer to facilitate such transfers, purchases or NICS checks. S.B. 281, also, amends the Juvenile Code and the reporting-of-students by adding automatic or semi-automatic guns to current weapons laws affecting minors and students.

ACTION – Oppose. Contact Judiciary Committee members to vote NO on S.B. 281. Call Senators Stone Ch., 404 463-1314; Cowser, V-Ch., 463-1366; Tillery, Sec., 656-0089; Heath, 656-3943; Jones II, 463-3942; Kennedy, 656-0045; Ligon, Jr., 463-1383; Parent, 656-5109; Rhett, 656-0054; Strickland 656-7454.

Brainwashing Bill to Destroy “Implicit Bias”

H.B. 745 Implement Evidence-based Implicit Bias Program should be the title of the bill.

Instead, Representative “Able” Mable Thomas introduced it January 15th as the “Georgia Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act.” It recommends having perinatal facilities implement full-blown evidence based implicit bias programs for health care professionals, with follow-up refresher courses every two years, or more frequently, if necessary. If a health care professional involved in the perinatal care is not directly employed by a perinatal facility, the facility shall offer the training to that health care professional. So, no one will escape indoctrination.

The goal: wipe out unconscious biases (values) toward race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language proficiency, nationality, immigration status, gender expression, or religion. *Effect:* politically correct training would “brain-wash” away conservative attitudes, thoughts, feelings, or characteristics of medical personnel in the perinatal field and expectant mothers would be treated only by progressive, pro-abortion clinicians.

ACTION – Oppose. Call Health & Human Services Committee Representatives Cooper, Ch., 404 656-5069; Newton, V-Ch., 656-0254; Rynders, Sec., 656-6801; Barr, 656-0298; Bennett, 656-0202; Cheokas, 656-0152; Dempsey, 463-2248; Douglas, 656-7859; Drenner, 656-0202; Frye, 656-0265; Gaines, 656-0325; Gordon, 656-0287; Hatchett, 656-5025; Hawkins, 656-7855; Henson, 656-7859; Hogan, 656-0177; Howard, 656-6372; Hutchinson, 656-0287; Jasperse, 656-5943; Jones, 656-0126; Kelley, 656-5024; LaHood, 656-0177; Lott, 651-7737; Mathiak, 656-0298; Mitchell, 656-0126; Parsons, 656-7853; Petrea, 657-1803; Pruett, 656-5143; Schofield, 656-0020; Sharper, 656-0126; Silcox, 656-3949; Stephens, 656-0265; Stephenson, 656-0126; and Tankersley, 656-7855.

U.S. Military

H.B. 768 Prohibit Housing Discrimination for Current or Former Military Personnel, introduced January 15th by Representative Sandra Scott, makes such discrimination a high and aggravated misdemeanor. This applies to owners of housing accommodations, banks and financial institutions, real estate rental or sale transactions, if the discrimination is based on the person's status as a current or former member of the U.S. armed forces.

ACTION – Support. Contact Judiciary Committee Representatives Fleming, Ch., 656-5125; Jones, V-Ch., 656-0213; Kelley, Sec., 656-5024; Nix, Ex-Officio, 656-5146; Bruce, 656-7859; Dreyer, 656-0265; Efstoration, 656-5105; Holcomb, 656-6372; Oliver, 656-0265; Reeves, 651-7737; Rich, 656-0254; Rutledge, 656-0254; Scoggins, 656-0325; Silcox, 656-3949; Stephenson, 656-0126; Welch, 656-5912; Wilensky, 656-0202; and Wilson, 656-6372.

H.B. 769 Graduate Education & Housing Assistance for Certain Disabled Veterans, by Representative Scott and introduced January 15th, requires the Veterans Service Department to create an educational assistance program to provide housing and tuition assistance to disabled veterans attending graduate school at any public or private college or university in Georgia.

ACTION – Support. Contact Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee Representatives Clark, Ch., 656-0213; Bonner, V-Ch., 656-0254; Prince, 656-0116; Clark, 656-0298; Efstoration, 656-5105; Glanton, 657-1803; Hitchens, 463-7855; Holcomb, 656-6372; Hopson, 656-0287; Jackson, 656-0220; Rogers, 651-7737; Sainz, 656-0177; Scott, 656-0314; and Tarvin, 463-3793.

H.B. 770 Service Dogs for Veterans, introduced by Representative Scott, requires the Veterans Service Department to create a competitive grant program to assist with the cost of service dogs for military veterans with PTS. Certified grant recipients would provide the dog, its equipment, training, veterinarian services, etc. Rules and regulations would be ready by January 1, 2022.

ACTION – Support. Contact Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee Representatives listed under H.B. 769.

H.B. 771 University System of Georgia In-State Tuition, introduced January 15th by Representative Sandra Scott, would be provided any active duty member of the military and/or dependent student or spouse of a member of the regular, reserve, or National Guard of the U.S. armed forces and the U.S. Coast Guard, provided they can prove Georgia residency. Methods for continuing such benefit during reassignment, honorable discharge or retirement are provided, but are slightly different for the active-duty person and dependents in the family.

ACTION – Support. Contact Higher Education Committee Representatives Martin, Ch., 656-5064; Reeves, V-Ch., 651-7737; Kelley, 656-5024; Bentley, 656-0287; Burnough, 656-0116; Clark, 656-0287; Dempsey, 463-2248; Dickey, 463-2246; Dreyer, 656-0265; Dubnik, 656-0213; Ehrhart, 656-0152; Gardner, 656-0265; Holcomb, 656-6372; Holland, 656-0116; Jasperse, 656-5943; Kausche, 656-0116; Knight, 463-2248; Mathiak, 656-0298; Metz, 656-6372; Park, 656-0314; Pirkle, 656-0188; Smyre, 656-0109; Washburn, 656-0152; Wiedower, 656-0325; and Williams 656-0287

H.B. 772 Green Call Alert Notification System, introduced January 15th by Representative Sandra Scott provides for an alert program to notify the public when a veteran or military service member is missing and is at imminent risk of self-harm or is known to have a service-related physical or mental health condition.

ACTION – Support. Contact Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee Representatives listed under H.B. 769.

H.R. 894 Joint Study Committee on Veterans' Suicide, Representative Sandra Scott introduced January 15th, creates a special ten-member appointed committee of representatives and senators to investigate the causes of and ways to prevent the suicide of veterans in Georgia. The committee may meet as often as needed and file a report of recommendations no later than December 1, 2020, at which time the committee will stand abolished.

ACTION – Support. Contact Defense & Veterans Affairs Committee Representatives listed under H.B. 769.

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