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News Flash - Hearing on "Death with Dignity"

February 29,  
2012

## MetroWest Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Greetings!

You may have seen referendum question petitions about assisted suicide for the November ballot. On the surface, assisted suicide seems like a personal choice that no one wants to make, but that should be allowed. The Disability Community is against this initiative. Read the information below, and learn about the dangers of this initiative. The Joint Judiciary Committee is holding a hearing next Tuesday. We encourage you to attend the hearing and share your concerns.

from Paul Spooner, Executive Director



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### Stop Assisted Suicide in MA We Need Real Choices, Not Medical Killing

Attend the hearing at the State House next Tuesday, and oppose H. 3884.

What: Hearing of the Joint Judiciary Committee on H. 3884 - an act to allow "[Death with Dignity](#)" in MA.

When: Tuesday, March 6 at 1 p.m.

Where: State House, Room A-2

Why: This bill is dangerous for people with disabilities, elders and people with serious illness.

Contact: Second Thoughts and John Kelly at (617) 536-5140 or visit [Facebook](#).

More Info: Download the [flyer](#).

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Please dress in BLUE.

### Second Thoughts

Second Thoughts is a group of Disability Rights Organizations and Activists who oppose this "Death with Dignity" ballot initiative.

Here are some of the compelling reasons why this bill is dangerous.

**Deadly Mix:** Assisted suicide is a deadly mix with a profit-driven healthcare system.

**Self-determination:** Assisted suicide is unnecessary to have control because each person has the right to refuse lifesaving

treatment, and to have adequate pain relief, including palliative sedation. Assisted suicide decreases self-determination by giving doctors and insurers the power not just to cure, but to kill.

**Abuse:** The proposed law is a recipe for elder abuse. An heir can be a witness and help sign someone up, and once a lethal drug is in the home, no one will know how the drug is administered. If the person struggled, who would know?

**No Safeguards:** A lack of safeguards and oversight in the proposed law puts people at risk of misdiagnosis, deprivation of treatment and economic pressure to choose suicide, while protecting doctors from liability.

- If a doctor refuses lethal drugs, the patient or family simply can--and do--find another doctor ("doctor shopping").
- "Terminal condition" and "death within six months" are often misdiagnosed, opening the dangers of assisted suicide to many who are not terminally ill.
- The law does not require that people are screened or treated for depression or other mental health conditions that cause suicidal feelings.
- The law does not include enforcement provisions, investigation authority, oversight or data verification. The only foolproof safeguard is for the prescribing doctors. The law holds doctors to only a "good faith" standard, which makes any safeguards unenforceable.

**Discrimination:** A law that singles out some people (such as old, ill and disabled people) for assisted suicide instead of suicide prevention is not in step with Massachusetts' progressive tradition as a leader against discrimination

Visit [www.Second-Thoughts.org](http://www.Second-Thoughts.org) for more information. (Note - the website is scheduled to go live this week.)

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and visit our website

[MetroWest Center for Independent Living](http://MetroWestCenterforIndependentLiving.org)

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