



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: All Wisconsin Legislators
FROM: Barbara Sella, Executive Director
DATE: March 2, 2026
RE: Opposition to LRB 5643, Legalizing Assisted Suicide

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Wisconsin bishops, strongly urges lawmakers not to co-sponsor legislation that would legalize assisted suicide, which kills people who are vulnerable.

LRB 5643 requires that an attending physician satisfy a patient's request for drugs to end his or her life, so long as that patient meets certain statutory requirements and submits a written request for the drugs.

No one wants to watch a loved one suffer. This legislation proposes killing people as the answer. There is a better way. Our society and health systems must surround patients with pain relief, support, and companionship, providing the assistance needed to ease their physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. This approach must be anchored in unconditional respect for human dignity, beginning with respect for the inherent value of every human life.

Simply put, our laws should prohibit killing people. Our laws should protect human life. As a society we do everything in our power to protect a person from taking her own life. We recognize that life is a profound good with inherent dignity, undiminished by the hardships we all face. The response to suffering must be to eliminate the suffering - not to eliminate the person.

The first principle of medicine is “do no harm.” Yet, even if only a few physicians agree to prescribe deadly drugs, assisted suicide radically changes the practice of medicine by turning that principle on its head. Instead of “do no harm,” the practice of medicine becomes “some lives are not worth living.”

If Wisconsin passes LRB 5643,

- Insurance companies will be incentivized to offer cheaper lethal drugs, rather than pay for expensive treatments.
- Patients will wonder if their physicians and insurance companies will push them towards killing themselves.
- Assisted suicide doesn't just impact the patient, it also implicates hospital, pharmacy, and insurance company employees.
- Individuals who have conscience objections to the lethal poisoning of their patients will face enormous pressures.
- The inherent inaccuracy of some prognoses will mean some individuals who are not terminally ill will be killed.
- Society will increasingly view those who are sick, frail, disabled, and elderly as better off dead.
- Passing this legislation means it will be easier for people to kill themselves than to get the supports they need to live.

Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, to name just three nations, show that assisted suicide eventually leads to killing those who are completely symptom free, those who are severely depressed, and those who have not voluntarily consented to ending their lives. Since 2004, the Netherlands has permitted doctors to euthanize newborns born with serious disabilities, like spina bifida.

Wisconsin must resist this spiral of death. We should alleviate suffering, not eliminate the person who is suffering. Let our laws strengthen human health and dignity, not undermine them.