

Colorado Aid in Dying Legislation – Things to Consider

At first glance, the idea of avoiding suffering and controlling the circumstances of our own death is attractive. The wise voter will not ask what this legislation looks like the year it is passed, but rather, “What will be its effects a generation from now?” Fortunately, we can look to the experience of Oregon and the Netherlands to see some of the unintended consequences that arise when a culture embraces aid in dying.

- ❖ Will the right to die gradually evolve into the duty to die?
- ❖ Swallowing large numbers of pills is difficult and sometimes doesn't work. Will self-administered aid in dying gradually be replaced by the more efficient euthanasia by lethal injection?
- ❖ Will the definition of needless suffering be gradually expanded to include people who do not have a terminal condition?
- ❖ Will children with birth defects and Autism someday be euthanized?
- ❖ Will the poor on Medicaid be denied coverage of expensive treatments in favor of the less expensive aid in dying?
- ❖ Will vulnerable elders be manipulated or coerced into asking for aid in dying?
- ❖ Someday, if a person is unable to give consent, will a physician be permitted to euthanize them because he or she believes “they wouldn't want to live this way”?
- ❖ A “Culture of Death” is a culture where death becomes the solution to a problem. When a culture embraces death as the solution to problems, it changes us. We become more casual and calloused about life and death. Is that the culture we want to become?

It is a slippery slope that leads from Colorado to the Netherlands...slippery but not steep. The road from here to there is subtle and gradual. But if we choose to take this path, there is no turning back. Let us be wise as we consider this issue.