



## WHY WE OPPOSE SB 128

### California's Assisted Suicide Bill

May 6, 2015

Dear Members of the State Senate,

Our coalition opposing SB 128 has a diverse membership including physicians and other health care providers, organizations dedicated to the rights of people with disabilities, and faith-based organizations. Members of the coalition oppose this bill for many and different reasons. We all strongly agree that physician assisted suicide is bad for Californians, particularly those with **low incomes who may lack adequate access to health care, including mental health services.**

- SB 128 would not require a psychiatrist to evaluate a patient before he/she decides to end their life.
- SB 128 would not require anyone to be present when the patient takes his/her lethal prescription.
- SB 128 would allow the patient, or designated agent, to pick up their lethal prescription at the local pharmacy.
- SB 128 would not require a patient considering physician assisted suicide to notify a family member.

- SB 128 would not require a trained medical person to be present when the patient takes his/her lethal prescription.

This bill will have a devastating impact on the treatment of terminally ill and disabled patients. If assisted suicide is made legal, it quickly becomes just another treatment option, always being the cheapest and, therefore, eventually the treatment of choice.

Suicide requests from people with terminal illness are usually based on fear and depression. Most all pain and depression among terminally ill people can be successfully treated. Yet primary care physicians are not generally experts in diagnosing depression.

Further, this bill undermines the integrity of the medical profession, as well as undermines the tremendous gains made in hospice and palliative care. Suicide should not be the first option when hospice and palliative care have not been tried.

We respectfully ask that you **not** support SB 128!

Sincerely,

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund  
Independent Living Resource Center of San Francisco  
Medical Oncology Association of Southern California  
Association of Northern California Oncologists  
Agudath Israel of California  
Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals  
FREED Center for Independent Living  
Communities United In Defense of Olmstead  
Independent Living Center of Southern California  
California Foundation for Independent Living Centers  
Placer Independent Resource Services  
The Arc of California  
Patients Rights Action Fund  
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center  
Disability Action Center (Formerly Independent Living Services of Northern California)  
California Catholic Conference  
Communities Actively Living Independent and Free  
California Disability Alliance  
Alliance of Catholic Health Care