

# CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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*Established 1981*

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## **Protecting yourself against California's Assisted-Suicide law** by Vicki Evans

In what will go down as a dark day in California history, an assisted-suicide law, the End of Life Option Act, with minimal safeguards took effect June 9. The End of Life Option Act states that a doctor, or anyone else, can assist in a suicide without being prosecuted for a crime. One can avail himself of assisted suicide if he has been diagnosed with a terminal disease and there is a reasonable prognosis of death within six months. He must be judged by two doctors as having mental capacity to make medical decisions. He then makes two oral requests and one witnessed written request to a doctor, who may then write him a lethal prescription.

The new law is implemented by going to California's Department of Public Health website and under "Hot Topics" clicking on "End of Life Option Act." There you will find the check-the-box forms needed. (<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/EndofLifeOptionAct.aspx>)

The patient completes a "Request for An Aid-In-Dying Drug to End my Life in a Humane and Dignified Manner" witnessed by two individuals.

The "Attending Physician Checklist & Compliance Form" is a three-page form consisting of a series of boxes the doctor checks off to document eligibility for assisted suicide. On the "Consulting Physician Compliance Form" a second physician checks off similar boxes. Nothing remains but the act of securing the lethal drug and ingesting it.

It takes little imagination to envision how this law puts the vulnerable at risk. Victims of elder abuse are vulnerable to persuasion. Family members or others who stand to inherit could exert subtle pressure by suggesting or encouraging suicide. A nursing home could have motives for moving the patient along. Consider these pitfalls.

- The definition of "terminal" only requires the doctor to predict the patient's death within six months. There is no requirement that he consider the impact of drugs or medical treatments in terms of survival. The fact is, many conditions become terminal if medications or routine treatments are discontinued. A diabetic will die within six months without insulin.
- There is no requirement that the two witnesses attesting to the patient's request know him personally, if proof of identity is provided. One witness can be a relative or someone who stands to inherit. One witness may be the operator or employee of a healthcare facility where the patient resides. Notification of next-of-kin is not required.
- Neither the attending physician nor the consulting physician must be your regular doctor. If your doctor believes an individual does not have mental capacity or is being pressured, there is no prohibition against "doctor shopping" until a doctor is found who will declare the individual capable of choosing assisted suicide.
- Investigation into violations of the law is prevented by a provision stating that information gleaned from the physician's assisted-suicide reporting form is not discoverable or compelled to be produced in any civil, criminal or administrative proceeding. This effectively prohibits any inquiry into possible foul play.
- Before writing a prescription for death, a doctor must discuss "feasible alternatives" or treatments. But this does not mean the patient has the ability or insurance coverage to access them.

- The law does not require the patient to be in the presence of a doctor when the lethal drugs are taken. It only addresses activities up until the drugs are procured. Nothing ensures that one is competent at the time the drugs are taken or that they are knowingly or willingly taken.

### So how can you protect yourself?

First, call this law what it is: assisted suicide. Language in the law provides that “death resulting from an aid-in-dying drug is not suicide.” Don’t fall for this abuse of the English language.

Be sure your doctor knows your wishes vis-à-vis assisted suicide. If he approves of his patients ending their lives, it may be time for a new doctor.

Beware of check-the-box forms becoming effective upon your signature and/or your doctor’s. This includes these “End of Life Option” forms as well as POLST, “Physician Orders for Life-Saving Treatment.” POLST should only be completed with reference to actual medical conditions. Many healthcare providers try to force the use of POLST. Say no unless circumstances warrant it.

Complete an Advanced Health Care Directive to appoint a trusted surrogate who knows your values and wishes. This will be the person making medical decisions for you if you cannot so it’s vital to appoint someone you trust with your life.

*Vicki Evans is Respect Life Coordinator for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. For a more detailed analysis of this issue by Vicki Evans, or information on where to obtain “Advance Health Care Directive” forms, contact our office.*

## How and When Do I Explain Abortion to My Children

Questions like the title of this article can keep us awake at night. Knowing how and when to talk to your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews (and for pastors – children in the church) about sensitive issues isn’t an exact science. However, our little ones are going to be exposed to topics like abortion via the internet, social media, and public education which have changed the rules of the game. With that in mind, here are a few practical suggestions for parents and

church leaders on how to get ahead of the issue and teach your children about abortion.

### Start Early

Parents always struggle with “How soon do I allow my children to be exposed to the brokenness in the world?” Best to err on the side of “sooner rather than later.” The first time a child is exposed to the brokenness of our world ought to be within the loving embrace of the family. In the current age of technology, children need to be ready for when they encounter the darkness.

We need to be proactive in teaching our children. This does not mean that we force the issue, though. A good way to be proactive, but not overbearing, is to use questions to gently bring up sensitive subjects. One parent approached this sensitive topic with his seven-year-old son by asking him if he knew why Dad had gone to a recent meeting. His son responded, “to speak.” The father responded, “Yes, I went to speak about abortion. Have you heard that word before?” He shook his head no. A few minutes later his son asked what abortion meant, and it led to “an amazing conversation.”

Good teaching requires knowing your students/ child’s knowledge and assumptions. Bad teachers simply lecture and then patronizingly ask, “Does that make sense?” Don’t do this with your child. Instead, ask your child questions to find out what your child’s knowledge level is on abortion. Is (s)he oblivious, disinterested, or already educated? Find out. Asking questions also allows for self-discovery. The father

**Do you know someone who might be considering abortion?**

**Make sure they get the facts first!**

**A LIFE depends on it...**

**1-800-712-HELP (4357)**

**Website: <http://www.optionline.org/>**

**It may not be too late...**

**Abortion Pill Reversal**

**If you know someone who has taken the Abortion Pill (Mifeprex or RU-486)**

**Call (877) 558-0333**

**[www.abortionpillreversal.com](http://www.abortionpillreversal.com)**

above commented, “You’d be amazed at the insight of seven year olds. They are already making sense of the world. They are forming their moral framework. When simply asked a question and introduced to abortion, children often know what to think if it.”

## Simplify the Issue

Children (and many adults for that matter) are confused about the pro-life position. We must simplify it. People need to know that we are pro-life because we believe

- **Premise/Reason 1** It is wrong to intentionally kill and innocent human being
- **Premise/ Reason 2:** Abortion is the killing of an innocent human being.
- **Conclusion:** Therefore, abortion is wrong.

Children also need to know the reasons that support this belief. They need to know that human beings are pro-life because science and philosophy direct us to be. Science informs us that from the earliest stages of development the unborn are distinct, living, and whole human beings. Also,

philosophically, we understand that there is nothing morally significant in the difference between an embryo and an adult that would justify killing the unborn. Differences of size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency are not good reasons to kill the unborn. (Remember these four points with SLED – Size, Level of Development, Environment, Degree of Dependency.)

The case for life is reasonable, rationale, and remarkably simple. Children easily grasp it. Use age-appropriate questions to simplify the issue. Here are some questions to consider using:

- “Is it okay to kill humans?”
- “Are the unborn human, and if not what are they?”
- “Would it be okay to kill unborn humans because they are smaller, not aware of themselves, dependent on their mommy for survival, and living in her womb?”

- “Are humans valuable because of what they can do like be self-aware and able to care for themselves? Or are they valuable because of what they are, a human being?”
- “If the unborn are valuable because they are human, what should we do with them?”

There you go. It’s that simple. You can teach your children the scientific and philosophical case for life by having a conversation directed by the right questions.

## Care for Those Affected by Abortion

As children get older, training our children to be pro-life doesn’t mean that we just make them apologists. We want them to love and serve those affected by

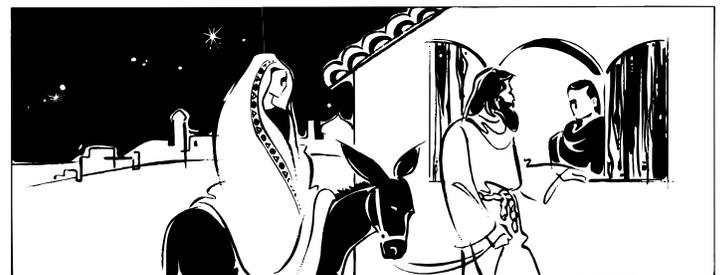
abortion. Whether this means that they volunteer at a local pregnancy resource center, or simply show compassion to their friends who have had an abortion, actively loving those affected by abortion must be stressed.

Perhaps a youth group might plan a service project to do odd jobs at a Pregnancy Center: perhaps painting, cleaning up the grounds,

sorting donated clothes, or other activities. The director might give a short presentation making the youth aware of what the resource center does for women, and how women might get in contact with the center. Many youth and even lots of adults have no idea what the pregnancy resource centers do. This experience opens eyes to the compassion in the pro-life movement and the reality of abortion in a way that words never could.

### SLED

- **S**ize
- **L**evel of Development – preborn, infant, child, teenager, adult
- **E**nvironment (in womb or born)
- **D**egree of Dependency – at all stages of life



***Blessed Christmas Season to all.  
“For unto us a Child is born”***

## *Calendar of Events*

*For the latest updates of events, see  
[www.calendarforlife.org](http://www.calendarforlife.org)*

### **WALK FOR LIFE – WEST COAST**

San Francisco – Sat. Jan. 21, 2017

Information Faire 11AM, Rally 12:30

Speakers include \* Pam Tebow, mother of Heisman Trophy winner, Tim Tebow, \* Reggie Littlejohn, Women's Rights Without Frontiers \* Melissa Ohden, abortion survivor \*Rev. Childress, Black Genocide.org  
See: <http://www.walkforlifewc.com/>

### **STUDENTS FOR LIFE NATIONAL CONFERENCES – *Born to Win:***

*Abolishing Abortion in Our Lifetime*

**West Coast** – Sun. Jan. 22, 2017 – St. Mary Cathedral  
Event Center, San Francisco. <http://sflalive.org/>

**MARCH FOR LIFE** – Washington D.C. 1/27/17  
<http://marchforlife.org/mfl-2017/>

### **WHO IS CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE?**

This is the newsletter of **California Right to Life Education Fund**, a 501-c-3 organization established to educate the public about pro-life issues. Donations to the EDUCATION FUND are **tax-deductible** and can be sent to P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-0343.

California Right to Life **Committee, Inc.** is a 501-c-4 organization providing information on legislative issues affecting the right to life, and pro-life political advocacy. **CRLC, Inc. is not permitted**, under IRS regulations, to offer a tax deduction for donations. \$24.99 annually is requested for a subscription to the CRLC legislative email updates list and can be sent to 2977 Ygnacio Valley Rd #243, Walnut Creek, CA 94598 (NOTE new address).

Both are affiliates of American Life League, headed by Judie Brown, and share the same “no-exceptions, no excuses” beliefs and the same dedication to promoting the Culture of Life, respecting all innocent human life from the single-cell stage to natural death.