

# CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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## **Court Rules There Is No Constitutional Right to Assisted Suicide**

by Wesley Smith

There is no constitutional right to assisted suicide, so the courts keep ruling.

In *Washington v Glucksberg* (1997), the Supreme Court of United States rejected an attempt to impose an assisted suicide *Roe v. Wade*.

State supreme courts have rejected state constitutional claims in Florida, New Mexico, and elsewhere.

In fact no high court in the USA has ever ruled that there is a constitutional right to assisted suicide (including in Montana, which issued a muddled ruling that assisted suicide did not violate public policy).

Now, New York can be added to the growing list.

First, a little background: The zealots at Compassion and Choices—formerly the more honestly named Hemlock Society—want the courts to pretend that when a doctor prescribes a lethal overdose for use in self-killing, it isn't really suicide. This blatant word engineering attempt is rejected outright by the court. From the Meyers v. Schneiderman:

Suicide has long been understood as “the act or an instance of taking one’s own life voluntarily and intentionally.” ...Black’s Law Dictionary defines “suicide” as “[t]he act of taking one’s own life,” and “assisted suicide” as “[t]he intentional act of providing a person with the medical means or the medical knowledge to commit suicide” (10th ed 2014). Aid-in-dying falls squarely within the ordinary meaning of the statutory prohibition on assisting a suicide.

The court proceeds to reject the constitutional claim to assisted suicide by a terminally ill person on several grounds. Here’s one that bears noting:

Refusing medical treatment when death is the likely outcome is not synonymous with a “right to die.”

Contrary to plaintiffs’ claim, we have never defined one’s right to choose among medical treatments, or to refuse life-saving medical treatments, to include any broader “right to die”

or still broader right to obtain assistance from another to end one’s life...

We have consistently adopted the well-established distinction between refusing life-sustaining treatment and assisted suicide. The right to refuse medical intervention is at least partially rooted in notions of bodily integrity, as the right to refuse treatment is a consequence of a person’s right to resist unwanted bodily invasions.

The court also notes that there is a rational basis for the state’s law against assisted suicide:

As to the right asserted here, the State pursues a legitimate purpose in guarding against the risks of mistake and abuse. The State may rationally seek to prevent the distribution of prescriptions for lethal dosages of drugs that could, upon fulfillment, be deliberately or accidentally misused.

This is very good. The last thing this country needs are courts imposing extra-democratically a radical social revolution against venerable values and mores, particularly in the face of hundreds of legalization rejections by voters and legislatures throughout the United States over the last twenty years.

One more point: When a social movement feels the need to hide its actual agenda beneath a veneer of goopy euphemisms (“aid in dying,” “death with dignity,” etc.) there is something very subversive about the agenda.

*Note: Wesley J. Smith, J.D., is a special consultant to the Center for Bioethics and Culture and a bioethics attorney who blogs at Human Exceptionalism.*

## **The Tragedy of Suicide**

by Cecelia Cody

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. 44,000 suicide deaths are reported each year, one every 13 seconds (800,000 annually worldwide). It is estimated there are 25 attempts for every suicide death. The national cost of suicide is over \$51 billion annually. Each death has a ripple effect impacting friends and loved ones. With more education, prevention and treatments, some of these lives could be saved.

What can we as “protectors of all life” do to stem this tide of unfortunate deaths? **Education – Treatment – Prevention.** The more people educated about suicide prevention, the more lives that will be saved.

The first step is being aware and alert.... **Know the warning signs.** Have you noticed any of the following:

- Dramatic mood changes. Is your friend restless, not eating, not able to sleep?
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community. Also giving away their precious belongings.
- Expressions of having no reason for living; no sense of purpose in life; saying things like: "It would be better if I weren't here," or "I want out."
- Has your family member been diagnosed with depression, bi-polar, or perhaps is suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disease (22 military personnel, active and retired commit suicide every day, and the suicide rate of post-abortive women is 6 times higher than for women who gave birth.)
- Often talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide. 75% of suicide victim share their plans.

**BE AWARE!** Take seriously any comments your friend makes or concerns you have. Do not be sworn to secrecy... seek out the support of appropriate professionals. Get help if you have concerns!

**“Ask the Questions.”** Call a hotline if you would like guidance on how to best address your concerns. Questions to ask might include:

- Is something bothering you?
- How have you been sleeping?
- Are you feeling more anxious than usual?
- Are you feeling depressed?
- Whom can we contact that you feel safe and/or comfortable with?
- Have you been feeling left out or alone?
- Have you been feeling like you’re a burden?
- Do you feel isolated and or disconnected?
- Are you experiencing the feeling of being trapped?
- Have you been drinking or taken any drugs or medications?

- Are you considering hurting yourself, or committing suicide? Do you have a plan?
- Ask whatever questions you feel need to be asked.

Many people are afraid to ask the questions, fearing they will “plant a seed” However many people are crying out silently for help, hungering for someone to care, someone to ask them a question.

Another avenue of education is to read books by those touched by suicide, depression and other mental illness. .

- In her book [His Bright Light: The Story of Nick Traina](#). Danielle Steele, popular women’s author, shares the story of her son who committed suicide.
- In [Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness](#) Pulitzer prize winning author William Styron tells the story of his own descent and recovery, laying bare the harrowing realities of clinical depression and chronicling his triumph over the disease that had claimed so many great writers before him. His final words are a call for hope to all who suffer from mental illness that it is possible to emerge from even the deepest abyss of despair and “once again behold the stars.”

**Prevention:** In an acute crisis call 911, or take the person to an emergency room or walk in clinic or call a mobile crisis service if one is available.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Or text TALK to 741-741

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Another easy number to remember 1-800-SUICIDE

Be Aware – Ask the Question – Know the resources available.... Human Life is Precious – Together we must work to protect it.

## **10 celebrities who are speaking out against abortion**

<https://www.liveaction.org/news/10-celebrities-who-are-speaking-out-against-abortion/>

**Tim Tebow -** Football star Tim Tebow isn’t shy about expressing his Christian faith and his pro-life convictions. During Super Bowl XLIV, Tebow appeared in a pro-life ad that shared how his mother rejected abortion and chose life. Tebow’s

foundation also hosts the annual “Night to Shine” event, which celebrates individuals with special needs.

**Justin Bieber** - In 2011, Justin Bieber shared his thoughts on abortion with Rolling Stone. He said, “I really don’t believe in abortion. I think [an embryo] is a human. It’s like killing a baby.” His mother, who shared that she turned to a pro-life pregnancy center for help when she was pregnant with Bieber, also helped promote the pro-life “Crescendo.”

**Jordin Sparks** - “American Idol” winner Jordin Sparks has participated in pro-life events and speaks out about her Christian faith. LifeSite News reports that one photo “in particular, which allegedly originally came from Jordin’s personal MySpace page (it is no longer there), shows Jordin holding up a popular pro-life sign—a red stop sign with the words “Stop Abortion Now.”

**Benjamin Watson** - Benjamin Watson, a tight end for the Baltimore Ravens, has spoken out about how abortion disproportionately kills African Americans. Watson, who spoke at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., is exposing Planned Parenthood’s origins in the racist views of its founder Margaret Sanger.

“I do know that blacks kind of represent a large portion of the abortions, and I do know that honestly the whole idea with Planned Parenthood and Sanger in the past was to exterminate blacks,” Watson said. “And it’s kind of ironic that it’s working.”

**Patricia Heaton** - “Everybody Loves Raymond” and “The Middle” actress Patricia Heaton is no stranger to standing up for life. Heaton recently spoke out against Iceland’s genocide of preborn children with Down syndrome and frequently posts pro-life content on her social media platforms. She has spoken out against abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and euthanasia.

**Jack Nicholson** - As a teenager, Jack Nicholson’s mother found herself pregnant. She was pressured to have an abortion, but she refused. When Nicholson discussed the situation, he affirmed his pro-life view: “I’m very contra my constituency in terms of abortion because I’m positively against it. I don’t have the right to any other view. My only emotion is gratitude, literally, for my life.”

**James Caviezel** - *Passion of the Christ* actor James Caviezel spoke boldly against abortion during an event in San Diego. During his message, Caviezel called abortion America’s “great sin,” and shared that there is hope and healing for families affected

by abortion. He also told the Catholic Register that he values his pro-life convictions more than his career:

“Look, I am for helping women. I just don’t see abortion as helping women. And I don’t love my career that much to say, ‘I’m going to remain silent on this’”

**Andrea Bocelli** - In 2011, Italian singer Andrea Bocelli shared how his mother was pressured to get an abortion while pregnant with him. She refused. Although Bocelli is blind, he has opened the eyes of the world to his incredible talent and passion for music.

**Kelsey Grammer** - Actor Kelsey Grammer is known to sport pro-life t-shirts and post bold pro-life statements on his social media channels, which receives heat from abortion advocates. Grammer, who attended the March for Life, once called “reproductive rights” a “dishonest” term, noting that killing isn’t a right anyone can possess.

“It gets a bit dishonest to call something reproductive rights when you clearly have a choice well before a baby is conceived,” Grammer said. “If someone has to die as a result of rape, then we should kill the rapist — not the unborn child.”

**Kathy Ireland** - Supermodel Kathy Ireland has appeared on the covers of major magazines, including Vogue, Cosmopolitan, and the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue. As a notable actress, businesswoman, and pro-life speaker, Ireland is not afraid to stand up for the preborn. She has advocated for the defunding of Planned Parenthood, spoken at pro-life events, and defended life on national television.

## Calendar of Events

*For the latest updates of events see*

*[www.calendarforlife.org](http://www.calendarforlife.org)*

**40-DAYS FOR LIFE** – Sept. 27-Nov. 5, 2017

See: <http://40daysforlife.com/> for a location near you.

**Caring Not Killing Conference**– November 18, 2017 Biola University, La Miranda CA – Protecting yourself, your family and others. To register:

<https://app.mobilecause.com/form/At1zgg>

For additional information, contact:

[info@schollbioethics.org](mailto:info@schollbioethics.org) 714.964.1284

**Students for Life – West Coast Conference – Sunday January 28, 2018 – St. Mary Cathedral San Francisco.** To register visit: <http://sflalive.org/>

