

Should Euthanasia Be Legalized In All States?

Posted on October 17, 2019

Euthanasia, Suffering, and the Legal Meaning of Assisted Death

Euthanasia is the practice of putting a person suffering from a painful or incurable disease to death painlessly. It also includes measures of allowing the patient to die by withholding the treatment process. It is also labelled as “mercy killing.” There has long been a debate about whether euthanasia should be allowed under law or not. In many countries, there is no legal provision for this practice, and that is why many people regard it as either murder or suicide.

As far as the United States is concerned, this practice is illegal in most states. The issue is highly debatable because it allows the doctor or legal guardians of patients to decide whether or not the treatment should be continued. The opponents of euthanasia claim that its legality will present a slippery slope, which, in return, would only give rise to negative outcomes. Such people claim that this practice is just a legal way to inflict death upon a person. They state that this act is equivalent to murder because the patient is not able to make decisions for himself, and if he is, he may not want to discontinue his treatment. Anti-euthanasia supporters believe that if legalized in all states, it may simply become a medical process of ending a patient’s life or saving the healthcare costs of the elderly population.

Many cases of abuse have been reported in countries which have legalized euthanasia. For example, a woman was euthanized in Belgium because she was suffering from anorexia, an eating disorder, which could have been treated with proper therapy and medication. In the Netherlands, many cases have been reported where patients have simply been euthanized to free up a hospital bed. Brazil has not yet legalized euthanasia, but there have been many incidents reported where doctors have put many patients in intensive care to death by this process.

Mental Illness, Eligibility, and the Problem of Expanding Boundaries

Furthermore, there is no barrier to the limits of euthanasia. There is a debate about whether it should be accessible to mentally ill patients or just those who are suffering from an unbearable physical condition. Many advocates of euthanasia state that its access must be allowed to those who are unbearably suffering. That suffering can even be depression, as was the case with a Belgian woman,

Simona de Moor. Simona de Moor volunteered for euthanasia through lethal poisoning after her daughter died.

My father also suffered a lot for 104 days before he died. His doctors said that he had only 90 days to live. In those days, I remember thinking of driving my father into a state where euthanasia was legal. However, I could not bring myself to euthanize my father. I had begun thinking like Brittany Maynard, who had decided to end her life when she was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. She specifically moved from her hometown in California to Oregon to take advantage of the latter state's Death with Dignity law. The state of Oregon has even allowed its doctors to prescribe their patients lethal drugs for euthanasia.

If euthanasia is allowed in all states across America, then it might reduce healthcare benefits. In states where this practice is legal, profit-driven health maintenance organizations have urged doctors to make urgent decisions about the life-or-death choices of their patients. This is because the cost of poisonous medication used for euthanasia is cheaper than the treatment cost incurred for long-term medication (Emanuel). This serves as a reason to save money by denying treatment to patients. The legalization of euthanasia has also affected many states' healthcare plans negatively. Many patients suffering from cancer have been denied surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy by their Health Care Plans (Fletcher). Instead, such patients have been told by their Health Plans that instead of covering their treatment, legalized assisted suicide would be covered.

Patient Vulnerability, Medical Uncertainty, and the Risks of Legalization

Such a state of affairs has only left patients in a state of uncertainty. They have become vulnerable in such states and this has also left the health care system to deteriorate. The process of euthanasia provides no relief for the sufferers because it only devalues human life and paints patients as a burden not only on their families but also on state expenditures as well. Legalizing this in all states will only lead to the beginning of segmentation within the society, where patients will be seen as outcasts.

Many medical organizations have spoken against euthanasia. Such institutions claim that health care is a measure to eliminate the pain and give patients relief, not cause them untimely death. Apart from patients, the act of legalizing euthanasia is also bound to leave an impact on those who see themselves as lonely, isolated or a failure (Golden). If a person sees himself unable to fulfil his life's expectations, if he feels like an outcast or an outsider or is presently unable to cope with a sudden failure in his life, he will become attracted towards the idea of ending his life in a state-sponsored way.

In short, the whole culture and structure of the society will collapse. Instead of being a moral society which encourages people and values life as a blessing, society is bound to head towards the wrong

direction. People will see death as a painless shortcut and an end to all their worries and shortcomings in life. They will let go of hard work, striving to meet their goals, and resilience will become the noble attribute of the past generations. Instead of allowing this practice to be legal, the government of the United States must vow to protect the lives of its citizens under any circumstance. Those who are suffering from depression due to their illnesses must be advised to seek therapy and medication instead of being encouraged to end their lives or allow others to make this decision for them.

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