

## **Arguments For Assisted Suicide**

1. In religious terms proponents argue that the role of religion should be to reduce suffering, not prolong it.
  - a. Thus to force a person to have to suffer a prolonged death is religiously inhumane
  - b. And in any case a religious decision should be between an individual believer and his or her god.
  - c. Thus according to a 1988 General Resolution Unitarian Universalists  
“advocate the right to self-determination in dying, and the release from civil or criminal penalties of those who, under proper safeguards, act to honor the right of terminally ill patients to select the time of their own deaths”
2. The US Constitution grants its citizens most fundamental rights as an inherent part of liberty which includes the right to die
  - a. The right to die is defined as the individual decision as to whether a person should be allowed to die, when he/she could only continue to live with the aid of life support, or in a diminished or enfeebled capacity.
  - b. Here death is held to be one of the most personal events in life and should thereby be left up to the individual involved to decide - not the state
3. In medical terms some argue, that the Hippocratic Oath is outdated and is in large no longer appropriate in a medical world that has witnessed tremendous technological and political change.
  - a. Just as other parts of the oath have been adapted for modern to meet standards, the phrase “do no harm” is in dire need of reevaluation.
  - b. Advocates for the legalization also contend that euthanasia in no way precludes doctors from providing the best palliative care to suffering patients.
  - c. Administering euthanasia is not, they say, an easy option for caregivers
4. There is the argument from popular consent whereby over the decades polls have indicated increased public support for assisted suicide
  - a. From 37% in 1947 to approximately 75% in recent polls

## **Arguments Against Assisted Suicide**

- 1.. One of the most commonly presented ethical arguments is often referred to as the  
“sanctity of human life.”
  - a. According to the Catholic Catechism , "God is the creator and author of all life."  
therefore only God is the judge of when to end life<sup>3</sup>.
  - b. The United Methodist Church opposes assisted suicide as sen in the following statement  
We believe that suicide is not the way a human life should end. Often suicide is the result  
of untreated depression, or untreated pain and suffering. The church has an obligation to  
see that all persons have access to needed pastoral and medical care and therapy in those  
circumstances that lead to loss of self-worth, suicidal despair, and/or the desire to seek  
physician-assisted suicide.
2. Many doctors support the most current version of the American Medical Association's  
Code of Ethics which states that physician-assisted suicide is prohibited.
  - a. They claim physician-assisted suicide is contrary to the Hippocratic Oath to do no harm
3. The “slippery slope” argument which expresses the concern that if euthanasia with the  
permission of a patient were to be legalized, it would not be long before involuntary  
euthanasia would start to happen.
  - a. Defenders of this concept say that legislation could never create a definite enough barrier  
between voluntary and involuntary euthanasia.
4. Then there is a practical argument that legalizing assisted suicide would give too much  
power to doctors.
  - a. From this perspective, euthanasia gives doctors, not patients themselves, the ability to  
decide when patients die.
  - b. No regulation on euthanasia laws could be strict enough to take this power away from  
doctors.
5. It is claimed studies have found that Do Not Resuscitate orders are more frequently used for  
black people, alcohol misusers, non-English speakers & people infected with  
Human Immunodeficiency
  - a. This demonstrates euthanasia has and can be used against those considered undesirable