

February 26, 2025

To: Montana House Judiciary Committee

From: Matthew Brower, Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference

Re: Testimony in opposition to HB 637

Madam Chair and committee my name is Matt Brower. I serve as Director of the Montana Catholic Conference.

The Conference remains steadfast in opposition to physician-assisted suicide. It represents misguided public policy and would have harmful implications for all of society. For example, permitting physician-assisted suicide sends the wrong message to young people of our state where we have one of the highest suicide rates in the country.

This bill could encourage people with years to live to throw away their lives. Note that, within the bill, the term “terminal condition” does not articulate any distinction between persons who will die within six months *with* treatment and those who will die within six months *without* treatment. And diagnoses of terminal illnesses and predictions of life expectancy can be extremely inaccurate.

Ultimately, physician-assisted suicide is contrary to our commitment to the common good. It abandons a subset of our population. If we say it’s okay for a population of our state to take their own lives and, with the state’s approval, those who assist them can do so with impunity, what incentive is there for the state to put resources into hospice, palliative care, etc.?

We urge a “do not pass” on House Bill 637. Thank you.