Reflection on Legalizing Euthanasia: Analytical Essay

Have you ever been forced to do something against your will? Well if you have, then you know exactly what it feels like. Feeling trapped and miserable is not enjoyable. For terminal patients, who are forced to deal with an excruciating amount of pain everyday, are forced to live against their will. Many of those terminal patients no longer see pleasure through living their life and end up dying with the same pain that has been with them for years. However, legalizing Euthanasia would prevent a patient from having to go through something that feels like torture. Euthanasia or assisted suicide is the medical practice that involves giving a terminally patient ill patient a lethal amount of drugs to end their life from a long battle of pain and suffering. Currently, only California, Hawaii, Vermont, Oregon, Colorado, Washington, and DC have legalized the practice of assisted suicide. On the other hand, the remaining 43 states fail to see the benefits of Euthanasia, and sentence individuals to jail for assisting terminally ill patients to end their own life. Some can debate and say that ending one's life is wrong and that the legalization of assisted suicide will be abused and downgrade the patients self worth. But on the other hand, assisted suicide has helped untreatable and suffering patients to die in a way that make their last few moments digniful. Yet, Euthanasia is many states of the U.S are still illegal, however assisted suicide should be legal nationwide because it allows terminally ill patients to die in digniful way, it gives patients the right to die, and also because the few states that have legalized euthanasia have received good results from legalizing the act.

Terminal patients, that are suffering from great pain can turn to Euthanasia to avoid having to die in a physically painful way. Patients with incurable illnesses fight long and hard against illnesses and suffer from years of pain but still put up a fight to live as long as they can. In fact, most people try to make the most out of the years that they have left, however, when it comes to the last few moments of their life some patients don't want to remember their last few moments on Earth to be filled with fear and suffering. For example, a women named Brittany Maynard who had a stage four virulent brain tumor, and she shared her opinion about assisted suicide, 'There is not a cell in my body that is suicidal or that wants to die. I want to live. I wish there was a cure for my disease but there's not... My glioblastoma is going to kill me, and that's out of my control. I've discussed with many experts how I would die from it, and it's a terrible, terrible way to die. Being able to chose to go with dignity is less terrifying" (Should Euthanasia be Legal?). As it has been shown, Euthanasia enable patients just like Brittany to avoid their last hours of life frightened and in excruciating pain. To add, many people see the legalization of Euthanasia as a way for people to escape an agonizing fate. For example the president of Compassion and Choices, Barbara Coombs Lee agrees that Euthanasia, "encourages patients to choose violent and premature deaths while they still have the strength to act. And it forces some to suffer through a slow and agonizing death that contradicts the very meaning and fabric of their lives…" (Should Euthanasia be Legal?). To sum up, these patients have no way to cure, or to ease the pain. Consequently, all these patients have are their last breaths on Earth. The legalization of assisted suicide will give these patients control over their death and prevent a terrible one. Furthermore, if Euthanasia was given as an option, patients that are suffering can make the choice to die with some peace of mind; knowing that they fulfilled their last breaths with moments of dignity and tranquility.

People have the right to die and make their own decisions about their body if faced with an

untreatable and painful illness or at least be able to have the option to commit suicide. Society allows us to have right to many things, the right to free speech, right to freedom of religion, and many more. It would only make sense to give people the right to die under terminal circumstances. In fact, many Americans agree with the concept of giving terminal patients the right to die. A poll study that was conducted, found that around 60% of the American population believed that if a patient is in extreme suffering and is in a painful and untreatable condition, the individual should have the right to commit suicide (Assisted Suicide is a Right 3). To add, 44.5% of physicians that participated in the poll are for terminal patients having the right to commit suicide and the legalization of Euthanasia (Assisted Suicide is a Right 3). Obviously, the data shows that most of the American population including physicians, agree that people have the right to commit suicide when faced with a terminal illness. Yet, majority of the United States deprive these terminal patients that right. Furthermore, individuals such as Michael Irwin, who is a former medical director at the United Nations believe that terminal patients should at least be given the option to commit Euthanasia. “I’m pro life - I want to live as long as I possibly can, but I also believe the law should be changed to let anyone with some severe medical condition which is causing unbearable symptoms to have an assisted suicide. I wouldn't want to be unnecessarily kept alive against my own will” (Should Euthanasia be Legal?) Just like the quote explained, no one would want to have something done to them against their own will; so if a terminally ill patient does not want to live anymore because the quality of their life is downgraded by their pain and suffering, no other individual should force that patient to keep on living their life in agony. The decision to commit assisted suicide is the patients right. Therefore, the patient should have the right to choose what happens to his or her body if they feel that they have done the most with their life and want the option to end it with dignity.

Some states have already legalized assisted suicide and have received good results from the legalizing it. Certain states have seen how assisted suicide could benefit terminal patients and legalized the practice of Euthanasia in that state. At this time, terminal patients were now able to be given the choice to commit suicide under terminal circumstances. Consequently, between the time periods of 1998-2006, Oregon which is the first state to legalize assisted suicide, had 455 lethal prescriptions prescribed to terminally ill patients, and only 292 of the patients decided to take the medicine to commit suicide (Walter 2). This goes to show that the choice to commit suicide is carefully weighed among the patients, but it still gives the patients the choice to do so. To add, the states that have legalized Euthanasia haven’t had much conflict with people taking advantage of the their right to die. In fact, certain laws are enforced to prevent non terminal patients from illegally and abusing assisted suicide. Furthermore, Cheryl Smith, who is an advocate for Euthanasia has explained that regulations such as “medical record documentation, and reporting requirements,” help people of authorities to “regulate the practice and guard against abuses” (The Right to Assisted Suicide). For example, It is by law, that in order for a physician to legally commit assisted suicide for a patient, they must follow these mandatory guidelines. First, the patient must voluntarily, and willingly agree to the assisted suicide, must be fully aware about the medical condition and the prognosis, and that there is no other treatment available, next the patient needs to, indeed suffer from unbearable pain, and lastly the physician that is assisting with the suicide must consult with another physician about the matter. These strict safeguards go to show that even though assisted suicide is legal in those certain states, that the law is thoroughly thought through to prevent it from being abused. Furthermore, this proves that Euthanasia is proven to be safe to legalize and that patients would benefit from having the option across the nation.

Many individuals believe that legalizing assisted suicide will allow and encourage non terminal

patients to abuse the option to practice Euthanasia. Although there is reason for people to be concerned with this problem, certain laws prevent the practice from being abused by unqualified patients. For example, Individuals in Oregon voted for the Death with dignity law in 1997. This law allowed patients to get a lethal amount of drugs to commit suicide under certain circumstances so that the right to assisted suicide would not be abused. This act stated, that the patient must be, “capable, and is a resident of Oregon” and that in order for the patient to get a written prescription to end their life, there must be confirmation from an “attending physician and consulting physician” that the patient is “ suffering from a terminal disease” and “voluntarily expressed his or her wish to die” (Euthanasia Revisited 128-134). The laws that were put in place show that the legalization of assisted suicide is heavily safeguarded to insure that only terminally ill patients can receive the lethal drugs, with consent, and that the law won’t be easily abused. This only goes to show, that legalizing Euthanasia is safe and prevents the assisted suicide law to be taken advantage of.

To conclude, the legalization of assisted suicide should be enforced across the nation because it grants terminal patients a painless and digniful death. Furthermore it’s the patient’s right to decide what happens to their body including their own death, and also because the positive feedback from the legalization of Euthanasia in other states, gives the others more reason to legalize it for the rest of the nation. Obviously, change will not occur overnight and it definitely will not happen if others don’t encourage it. If you want to make help legalize Euthanasia in your state, I strongly urge you to write a letter to the Death with Dignity organization. Share a story of your experience with a loved one who was suffering from a terminal patient and was denied their right to die. Consequently, sending your story to the Death and Dignity website will be used with many others to encourage other states to consider legalizing assisted suicide. And with that simple action, you can help other suffering patients to take back their right to die.