

## Californians Against Assisted Suicide: Assisted Suicide 'Study' From Biased Author is Questionable at Best

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept. 27 /PRNewswire/ -- The following was released today by Californians Against Assisted Suicide:

A new "study" released Wednesday by Death with Dignity National Center (an assisted suicide advocacy group) board member Margaret Peggy Battin, attempts to show that many vulnerable groups are not "disproportionately" impacted by assisted suicide legalization in Oregon and the Netherlands. However, given Battin's twenty-year plus record pro-assisted suicide advocacy casts a serious shadow over any of her "study's" conclusions.

Battin's advocacy in support of assisted suicide is chronicled extensively in the book *Deadly Compassion* (Wm. Morrow and Co., 1993, pp 148-152) authored by Rita Marker of the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide:

Below is an excerpt from the book *Deadly Compassion*, (Rita Marker, New York: Wm. Morrow and Co., 1993, pp. 148-152.):

Among those who suggest that suicide advocacy may be a legitimate counseling position has been philosopher Margaret Pabst Battin. A speaker at many ethics conferences in the United States and throughout the world and the author of numerous articles and books, Battin has served as philosopher in residence at a Veterans Administration medical center and travels around the country giving ethics seminars for medical students. She has also spoken very persuasively for more than ten years about the benefits of suicide.

In April 1981 she urged those attending meetings of the American Association of Suicidology to consider making suicide advocacy a component of suicide prevention programs. She said that such advocacy would add a "new sensitivity" to the work of suicide prevention. Her paper was reprinted in the January 1982 edition of the *Hemlock Quarterly*.

Although she acknowledged that suicide prevention was praiseworthy, Battin said that it "may very well not be humane" in some cases. Openness to the possibility of supporting suicide would offer the benefit of a more accepting, more reasonable, and more caring atmosphere, she claimed.

She urged a "genuine interaction and exchange" between the two different responses to the potential suicide. "After all, suicide advocacy, like suicide prevention, is humanitarian at root. Each has -- or should have -- the interest of individual human beings at heart," she said.

At a Hemlock Society conference in 1985, Battin acknowledged that dying "relatively early, relatively easily, in a way in which you won't impose a burden on others" was a real possibility if euthanasia was legalized ...

... Those least capable of withstanding the pressure to request euthanasia or commit suicide would be people who have been the least self-determining throughout their lives, Battin suggested. She noted that particularly vulnerable would be a woman who has lived for her family and has always been concerned about the needs and comfort of others ...

... Two years later, in March 1987, an article in the Washington Times described Battin as saying that suicide assistance might be warranted for elderly people worried about the prospect of extreme old age and lack of resources. [Joyce Price, "Pro-Suicide Activists Call for Right to Assist," Washington Times, March 13, 1987.]

Californians Against Assisted Suicide (CAAS) was established to defeat legislation that would legalize "assisted suicide" in California. CAAS is a coalition of health care, disability rights, and grassroots advocacy organizations united in strong opposition to the legalization of "assisted suicide."

<http://www.CA-AAS.com>

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