



From the Office of the President

John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.

REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

On Proposition 106

August 23, 2016

I am joining with other voters in Colorado in opposing Proposition 106, which would permit Physician Assisted Suicide in our state.

At the core of my concern lies the belief that all human life is sacred, that the end of our lives is as meaningful as how we live out our time on this earth, and that our human existence directs us to the divine ends for which we are all called by God. In that context, doing all we can to assist our loved ones to experience a true death with dignity does not include offering a form of suicide prescribed by a physician. Instead, we should be directing our efforts toward improving the network of care available to Colorado families through supportive hospice programs, palliative care availability, and enhanced training in end-of-life care for physicians and other care givers.

In addition to these concerns grounded in a profound religious and moral perspective, I would also ask that we all consider the practical effects such legislation might have on placing our most vulnerable fellow citizens into decision-making that may be influenced by considerations of mental instability, disability, and poverty as they contemplate this option. Once a physician provides a lethal prescription, he or she is not in a position to judge whether the individual's ultimate decision to use the lethal medication takes place under the "right" circumstances, with the needed support the person needs present, and with the requisite presence of mind of the patient. Further, this proposal does not require that a medical professional with psychological training be involved in evaluating whether the individuals who request life-ending drugs are suffering from depression or other conditions that might impair their judgment, nor whether they have access to appropriate mental health screening and treatment. Such considerations would clearly be at the forefront of our standard of care at the end of life in a hospital—why would we abandon that ethic of protection and human dignity for physician-prescribed suicide?

For all of these reasons, Proposition 106 would take Colorado down a dangerous path for physicians, for families, for the most vulnerable among us, and ultimately for our community. I add my voice to those of so many in Colorado in opposing this legislation.

Gratefully,

Rev. John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.
President