

# **South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc. (SAVES)**

## **Patrons:**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **PHYSICIAN ASSISTED DYING LAW NOW IN WASHINGTON**

The Washington Death with Dignity Act was passed by voters 58.68% (yes) to 41.32% (no) at the recent Presidential election.

Washington will become the second state, after Oregon, to allow doctors to prescribe lethal doses of medication for terminally ill patients seeking to hasten their deaths in a humane and dignified manner.

The new law does not permit doctors to administer lethal medication in the form of injection, only to prescribe medication for ingestion.

### **Safeguards include:**

- A consulting physician for medical confirmation of the diagnosis, and for a determination that the patient is competent, making an informed decision and acting voluntarily
- If, in the opinion of the attending physician or the consulting physician, a patient may be suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder or depression causing impaired judgment, either physician shall refer the patient for counseling.
- At least fifteen days must elapse between the patient's initial oral request and the writing of a prescription.
- At least forty-eight hours must elapse between the date the patient signs a written request and the writing of a prescription.

Voluntary euthanasia is now also a legal possibility in the Netherlands, Belgium, Oregon and Switzerland. Luxembourg is expected to follow soon.

**81% of South Australians support choice for voluntary euthanasia (Newspoll 2007).**

**It's been 13 years since John Quirke introduced the first voluntary euthanasia bill into our parliament in 1995.**

South Australia now has its 7<sup>th</sup> voluntary euthanasia bill in parliament.

WHY ARE WE STILL WAITING FOR LAW REFORM TO GIVE US CHOICE?

Contact

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