

May 14, 2007

**Statewide Builders of a PRO-LIFE TEXAS****6776 Southwest Freeway, Suite 430
Houston, Texas 77074**

Dear Senators,

After days of negotiations orchestrated by Lt. Gov. Dewhurst with interested stakeholders who crafted fundamental language changes, Texas Right to Life is able to support CSSB 439. The following changes are substantial and will ensure that CSSB 439 strengthens current statute to protect the lives and wishes of patients and their entrusted surrogates:

- The troublesome term "pre-terminal" was stricken.
- Language relating to the provision of artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH) was clarified so that ANH can only be withdrawn if the risk of providing ANH is greater than the benefit of continuing it.
- Language was deleted that would have allowed a hospital to decrease the level of care during the 21 days rather than give all life-sustaining treatment during this waiting period (which is the standard of current law).
- The language regarding the 7-day notice prior to the Ethics Committee meeting was amended so that the same materials and resources offered to families in current law (at the 48 hour warning) are also offered at the start of the 7 days.
- The language regarding attendance at the Ethics Committee was clarified to ensure that the number of people the family can invite for support is not unduly limited.
- Language was stricken that allowed a hospital to withdraw treatment from a patient without an Ethics Committee review if the patient had been denied care previously at another health care facility within the same health care system.

Although the time period allotted to patients to find a transfer was not included in these recent negotiations, the above changes are substantial and do in fact clarify and improve the process of Chapter 166.046.

We thank Lt. Gov. Dewhurst for recognizing the need for more time to iron out these issues and for including Texas Right to Life and the disability rights organizations in the process. Lt. Gov. Dewhurst and his staff played a vital role in clarifying the problems, understanding the perspectives, and crafting the resulting consensus language in CSSB 439 so that patients are protected from involuntary euthanasia.

Please support CSSB 439 that is expected to be on the Senate floor today.

Sincerely,


Dr. Joseph Graham
President