

Physician-Assisted Suicide

Calm at the Capitol? Or The Calm Before the Storm?

Inside this issue:

Age of Consent News	2
Dr. James Dobson to Interview Kelly Rosati	2
HFF Testimony on Selected Issues	3
2003 Legislative Bill Status	4

As this edition of HFF's newsletter goes to print, something remarkable appears to be happening. House and Senate leaders are telling constituents that the physician assisted suicide (PAS) bill will not even receive a single public hearing. This is the same 'word on the street' at the capitol among lobbyists and insiders.

But will this calm hold? Or is it the calm before the storm? While the former appears most likely, we remain prepared for the latter. And how could we not stay prepared for battle? No one involved in this issue will soon forget the 11th hour attempt to pass the bill during the 2002 legislature. That year's bill was also supposedly 'dead' but somehow survived to nearly become law in the waning hours of the 2002 session.

So, we stay alert but nevertheless count our blessings for what has occurred to date. Here's the summary from both

chambers.

? Senate

The deadline has passed for the bill to be heard in the Senate. The Senate's version of the bill, SB391, was never scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Health Committee. This also means it never made it to its second committee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, where the Committee Chair, Colleen Hanabusa, is the bill's author and chief proponent. Because of this, per the Senate rules, the bill is dead absent extraordinary parliamentary action.

? House

The House version of the bill, HB862, was referred only to the Judiciary Committee. It could still receive a hearing in that committee anytime before February 28. However both

the offices of Judiciary Chair Eric Hamakawa and House Speaker Calvin Say are reporting to those who call in that the bill will not be heard this year. We shall see.

As many of you know, HFF was very concerned that this year's House PAS bill, once again, was scheduled to skip review by the Health Committee-the committee in the best position to examine to medical complexities involved in PAS.

Mahalo to all of you who called to express your opinion on that issue. The sheer number of calls coming in from the public to the legislature before a hearing had even been scheduled did not likely escape the attention of key decision makers. Once again, getting involved clearly makes a difference. Stay tuned. Call us at (808) 230-2100 if you need

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Calendar of Events

Mar 3-5, 2003

Recess

Mar 6

First Crossover

Mar 18

Budget Decking

Mar 20

Budget Crossover

Mar 26

HOLIDAY

Kuhio Day