

the Legislature and the community about the dangers of legalized assisted suicide. Capitol insiders tell us this may be our biggest battle yet and we'll need to marshal our troops as never before. So please, be ready and willing to make that simple phone call, write a quick e-mail or even attend a hearing when we issue the alert. As always, we'll never issue a call to action unless it is absolutely necessary. But once it is issued, we need a stronger response than ever before. Mahalo in advance for your participation in standing for Hawaii's families.

Other 2005 Issues

Civil Unions

Proponents of same-sex marriage will likely attempt, once again, to replace Hawaii's reciprocal beneficiary statute with a full-scale counterfeit marriage proposal known as civil unions. Unlike Hawaii's carefully crafted reciprocal beneficiary law, which is not based on sex-partner status, the civil unions proposals of the past seek to equate same-sex sexual relationships with the institution of marriage. And while the institution of marriage is facing serious challenges including unilateral no fault divorce, domestic violence and a host of other difficulties, the last thing it needs is to be further undermined through its redefinition. Hawaii's reciprocal beneficiary approach to extending benefits is now being considered in several states on the mainland as an alternative to the sex-partner status benefits of civil unions.

Religious Freedom

Protecting religious freedom will likely emerge in several forms in 2005. The first is an all-out attack by abortion proponents on our local Catholic hospitals St. Francis Healthcare System of Hawaii, seeking to force it, against its policies and principles, to provide abortifacient pills to women who have been sexually assaulted. St. Francis is a pro-life institution and should not be required by government to participate in abortion—period. That's precisely the freedom—to practice one's religion— that the First Amendment is designed to protect.

In another assault on religious freedom, same-sex marriage proponents want to require religious landlords to rent their property to unmarried couples, including same-sex couples. Religious institutions and organizations should not be forced by the government to violate their beliefs.

We will also be working to **promote adoption of abused and neglected children** in Hawaii's foster care system, to **strengthen protections for domestic violence victims** and to be ever vigilant in **fighting** any attempts to legalize **commercial gambling in Hawaii**.

As always, the 2005 Legislature holds great promise and peril and we will be there as a voice for Hawaii's families. Mahalo for standing with us. We couldn't do it without you.

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Ohana News in Brief

November-December, 2004

ALOHA FROM RETURNING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KELLY ROSATI

Aloha. It is so wonderful to be home again. We missed Hawaii and all of you very much. Our time, however, on the mainland was so very significant in a number of ways. I was privileged to care for my dying grandfather right up until the moment of his death. He suffered from prostate cancer, which spread to his bones and brain. Thankfully, he received great end-of-life care and never, ever suffered in pain. The lessons I learned in caring for my grandpa strengthened my resolve to fight against the legalization of assisted suicide. I was struck by the vulnerability of people facing the end of their lives. My grandfather was a strong World War II bombardier who always took care of those around him. It was our privilege to have the opportunity to take care of him at the end of his life. People who are dying without loving and supportive family around them are extremely vulnerable to abuse and coercion regarding their end of life choices. Dying people need significant care—and while caregiving is rewarding, it is also exhausting. Caregivers need assistance and our public policy should reflect our desire to improve end-of-life care not to abandon those at the end of life to suicide as their only option.

2005 Legislature

The 2005 Legislature could bring our most serious battle on the **assisted suicide issue** since 2002 when the attempt at legalization failed by only one vote on the floor of the Hawaii Senate. This year's election results demonstrate that assisted suicide advocates have the votes to pass the bill. We will be doing everything possible not to let that happen—and we'll need your help to do it. Whenever suicide advocates claim this issue is about autonomy, we need to be ready to remind them it is about **community**. The so-called right to die for some should not be implemented at the expense of others. There is no way to legalize assisted suicide as a 'benefit' for some, without jeopardizing the very lives of others in the community who would be vulnerable to abuse and coercion. There is also no way to grant the so-called 'right to die' without creating a 'duty to die' for others in our community. And there is no way we can allow doctors to intentionally assist in the death of their patients, without destroying the underlying trust component of the crucial physician-patient relationships. These are some of the reasons cited by the U.S. Supreme Court when it ruled there is no constitutional right to assisted suicide. These are also some of the reasons 49 states have consistently rejected the notion of legalized assisted suicide. And these are some of the reasons Hawaii's medical, disability rights and faith communities continue to work together through Hawaii's Partnership for Appropriate and Compassionate to educate

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