



new york state **RIGHT TO LIFE COMMITTEE, INC.**

COMMITTEE

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New York State Right to Life Strongly Opposes A2634 Rosenthal/S4967 Rivera

New York State Right to Life strongly opposes A2634 Rosenthal/S4967 Rivera. This bill removes a protection currently in New York Public Health Law that states that agents cannot decide to remove nutrition and hydration from patients unless they know the patients' wishes. Without these protections, patients can be in grave danger. New York State Right to Life will be carefully tracking all votes on this egregious bill.

- This bill removes a current protection in New York Public Health Law that states "Unless your agent knows your wishes about artificial nutrition and hydration, your agent will not have the authority to decide about artificial nutrition and hydration." This bill replaces this with a provision that simply states, "For example, you may state your wishes regarding withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment (including hydration and nutrition) to guide your agent's decisions." Needless to say, this change vastly reduces the protection for patients. If this bill passes, agents could authorize the removal of nutrition and hydration from patients without the patients' express consent. This amounts to forced starvation much more becoming of a brutal dictatorship than a free society.
- This bill also defines nutrition and hydration as "health care." This is grossly inaccurate. Each one of us eats and drinks every day without it being expressly prescribed by a medical professional. Nutrition and hydration are not health care. They are basic necessities for all people whether sick or healthy. Defining nutrition and hydration as health care serves no purpose other than offering an excuse to those who want to make nutrition and hydration optional for patients who are under their control.
- Finally, this bill empowers agents to authorize the removal of all assisted nutrition and hydration from patients, not just nutrition and hydration that is medically assisted. This means that agents could even deny patients spoon feeding. This is shocking to the conscience. Such cruelty has no place in a society which is concerned for the vulnerable.

Sixteen Years ago, the nation watched with horror as Terri Schiavo was starved to death by her own husband, while the government that was supposed to protect her sided with her husband. However, there are some in the New York State Legislature who apparently would like to make the Terri Schiavo case the norm in New York. Such forces must not be allowed to prevail. New York State Right to Life strongly urges all legislators to vote against this profoundly cruel bill.