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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 239

Dan Roberts – Publisher/Editor

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Committee members.

My name is Dan Roberts, and I am the publisher and editor of *The Vegas Voice* – the largest monthly senior publication in Nevada. *The Vegas Voice* also hosts weekly podcasts and YouTube/streaming political videos; including our political segments called “*The Last Word.*”

I am here today in support of SB 239. I do not, however want to take up this Committee’s time with my thoughts. There will be other testimony from individuals much more compelling than mine, who will share their agonizing end-of-life stories.

Instead, I would like to tell you about our readers’ feelings concerning this issue.

It began in September 2018. *The Vegas Voice* wrote about such “Final Wishes” life decisions. We asked readers for their input. Should *The Vegas Voice* support an end-of-life, death-with-dignity law?

We wanted to know their opinions, both pro and con. In that 1st month we received over 500 responses. To my surprise, our survey showed **95%** supported such a law. Yes, I recognize that the survey was unscientific but **95%?**

As you can imagine, we also received numerous comments from readers. Basically, it came down to two reasons why they would be opposed to such a law:

1. Only God has the right to decide when a person should die.
2. If such a law was passed, it would create a “*slippery slope*” and who knows what unscrupulous family members, or even the government would eventually do down the road.

SB 239 addresses the second point. There are rigid requirements and procedures that must be followed before a person receives that final medication prescription.

And although I understand and respect those who would sincerely and vigorously oppose such a law on religious grounds, no one is being forced to submit to this law if they believe that such final action is against God’s judgement.

But for those who wish to “take their chances with the Almighty” why should a government entity say no?

I believe the opening paragraph of SB 239 goes right to the heart of the matter: *A mentally capable adult patient should have the right to self-determination concerning his or her health care decisions based on his or her values, beliefs, or personal preferences.*

Beginning this year, *The Vegas Voice* initiated a petition drive for such self-determination. As evidenced by the books on this table, to date, we have received over 1200 responses from our readers who favor such a law. We only received 5 in opposition.

There is overwhelming support for SB 239 by the senior community. They have spoken loud and clear: Let us decide what our options and final wishes should be - not the government.

Along with our *Vegas Voice* readers, I urge you to pass SB 239.

