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Statement on Governor Edmund G. Brown's Signing of ABx2-15

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Governor Brown's decision to allow doctors to help their patients kill themselves is deeply disturbing.

This is the wrong decision for California. How wrong this decision is will be measured in the lives that will be lost in the years to come — the lives of poor people, the elderly, the disabled and those who are dependent on public assistance.

We need to be clear about what this law means. Today the State of California is making it legal for a doctor to write prescriptions for the express purpose of killing another human being.

This is a new path for the State and we have no idea where it will lead.

We do know that Assembly and Senate leaders rushed this bill through and did not consider many of the complicated financial, medical and public policy questions involved in terminal illness and end-of-life care. This is no way for our great State to make policy on a life and death issue that will affect millions of individuals and family members for generations to come.

We also know that millions of Californians living on government-subsidized health care. This law provides no protections and no rights for these people or for anyone who might want the "choice" to receive treatment instead of suicide pills when faced with a serious or terminal illness.

How does the State plan to prevent lethal prescriptions to commit suicide from becoming the only "option" available for the poor? And once we establish in law that some lives are not as valuable as others — not worth "paying for" — what will be next for California?

We should not say to future generations that we responded to human pain and suffering by making it easier for those who suffer to kill themselves. We are a better people than that.

In the face of this new law, the Catholic Church, here in Los Angeles and throughout the state, continues to pray and remains committed to providing truly compassionate care for the elderly, the disabled and those facing terminal illness — especially the poor and the vulnerable.