

PRESS RELEASE - May 16, 2006

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

The members of Physicians for Compassionate Care Education Foundation (PCCEF) applaud and commend the United Kingdom (UK) Parliament House of Lords in their 148 to 100 vote decision of May 12, 2006, in opposing a physician-assisted suicide bill--a bill based on Oregon's physician-assisted suicide measure.

The majority of the House of Lords heeded the concerns expressed by major physician organizations in the UK which have documented their member's opposition to the legalization of assisted suicide.

For example, 95% of Palliative Care specialists have indicated their solid opposition to the legalization of assisted suicide. Further, a recent poll of the Royal College of Physicians Fellows and Members resulted in 73% being opposed to changes in legislation that would legalize physician-assisted suicide. As such, the leadership of each of these Colleges is on record in opposition to the legalization of assisted suicide.

The medical and legislative leaders of the UK have recognized the harm and dangers of legalization of assisted suicide. They recognize that it is far better to put efforts into promoting palliative care and hospice care, rather than in giving doctors the legal right to participate in directly causing the death of patients. They recognize that the so-called "safeguards" of Oregon's assisted suicide law are not always being followed.

Again, we congratulate the medical and legislative leaders of the UK in their decision not to follow the example of Oregon's misguided assisted suicide law.

The members of PCCEF affirm the ethic that all human life has inherent value and promote compassionate care for all severely ill patients. At the same time, PCCEF is opposed to doctor-assisted suicide as an inherent conflict of interest which: undermines trust in the patient-physician relationship; alters the role of the physician in society from the traditional one of healer to executioner; and endangers the value that society places on life, specifically for those who are most vulnerable.