

# Psak Halacha

## Regarding attempts to pass "Death with Dignity" legislation:

The *chiyuv* (Torah injunction) of "*Lo sa'amod al dam re'echa*", obligates everyone to do what he or she can, to help prevent assisted suicide and/or euthanasia.

Allowing the legalization of "assisted suicide", even if this particular law in practice would only result in assisting a suicide and not euthanasia, is to allow *shefichas-domim* (bloodshed). Furthermore even rendering such actions not being subject to prosecution, is allowing *shefichas-domim* (bloodshed), *al achas kama vekama* (how much more so), in cases of assisted suicide leading to euthanasia.

This obligation would include:

- 1) Voting on the basis of this issue. Thus, when voting for any public official, this issue must be considered as top priority, certainly overriding financial considerations, government programs, etc. By voting for people who support these laws, we become accountable for their actions. This ruling would still apply even if these laws were to be passed, we would still be forbidden to vote for legislators who voted for these laws. This is the most important way to fulfill our obligation.
- 2) Urging one's legislators to vote against these bills, if and when they arise<sup>[1]</sup> and to urge the governor to veto such bill, were it to pass the legislature.
- 3) Helping in efforts to repeal such laws, in areas<sup>[2]</sup> where such legislation was already passed.

Even a few votes can make a major difference, both by legislators and the public—sometimes the vote of a single legislator can decide the fate of these laws—as is evidenced by the recent vote in the New Jersey State Assembly (in November 2014), where an assisted suicide bill was passed by just one vote. We have seen in several recent races in Jewish neighborhoods, that even a handful of votes can make the difference in the outcome of the election<sup>[3]</sup>. Furthermore, some legislators keep track of the calls that are made to their offices on particular controversial issues, and vote according to their results.

May the Creator of all life grace us with the merit to save innocent lives, fulfilling our role as an *or legoyim* (light unto the nations). In that merit, may we help usher in the Final Redemption by *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.

*Rabbonim are listed alphabetically.*

Eliyahu Ben-Halm <i>RIETS/Kehillah Yotzei Mashad</i>	Yisroel Dovid Harfenes <i>Yisroel Vehazmanim</i>	Dovid Ribiat <i>mechaber "The 39 Melochos"</i>
Haim Benoliel <i>Bnai Yosef/Mikdash Melech</i>	Boruch Hirschfeld <i>Ahavas Yisroel, Cleveland</i>	Yosef Yitzchok Rosenfeld <i>Monsey Dometz</i>
Gad Bouskila <i>Netivot Israel</i>	Yosef Meir Kantor <i>Cong. Agudath Israel of Monsey</i>	Chaim Schabes <i>Knesses Yisroel</i>
Yitzchok M. Braun <i>Shaaray Zion</i>	Yeshaye Gedalye Kaufman <i>Hisachdus Moretz, Kruleh Dometz</i>	Moshe Silberberg <i>Shuvu/mechaber "Zichron Tzvi Meir"</i>
Shlomo Breslauer <i>Bais Tefilah</i>	Amram Klein <i>Ungvar</i>	Moshe Solovitchik <i>Chicago</i>
Eliyahu Brog <i>Bais Yisroel</i>	Shloime Ben Zion Koklis <i>Zichron Mordechai</i>	Yitzchok Sorotzkin <i>Mesivta of Lakewood</i>
Simcha Bunim Cohen <i>Khal Ateres Yeshaya</i>	Grainom Lazewnik <i>Khal Adar Gbir</i>	Tzvi Steinberg <i>Kahal Zera Avraham, Denver</i>
Yitzchok Cohen <i>Yeshiva University RIETS</i>	Moshe Tuvia Liefv <i>Agudath Israel Bais Binyomin</i>	Shlomo Stern <i>Debreiner Rov</i>
Menachem Fisher <i>Vien Monsey</i>	Shmuel Miller <i>Yeshiva Bais Yisroel</i>	Elya Ber Wachtfogel <i>Yeshiva of South Fallsburg</i>
Noson Yermia Goldstein <i>mechaber of "Migdalos Noson"</i>	Avrohom Yaakov Nelkenbaum <i>Mirrer Yeshiva</i>	Boruch Hersh Waldman <i>Slach Yitzchok, Suffern</i>
Shmuel Gorelick <i>Mesivta Ohel Torah</i>	Yechiel Perr <i>Yeshiva of Far Rockaway</i>	Moshe Weissman <i>Ohel Moshe</i>
Moshe Green <i>Yeshivah D'Monsey</i>	Avrohom Reich <i>Hatzolas Yisroel</i>	Gavriel Zinner <i>Nitel Gavriel</i>

*Institutions are listed for identification purposes only.*

[1] as is currently in New Jersey [2] such as Washington state and Oregon

[3] most noticeably (demonstrated) in the Senate election between David Storobin and Lew Fidler, where Storobin won by less than 20 votes.

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