



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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COMMISSION ON DEATH & DYING

House Bill 4501 (Substitute H-4)
Sponsor: Rep. Thomas G. Power
Committee: Judiciary

Complete to 10-10-92

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4501 (SUBSTITUTE H-4) AS INTRODUCED 3-7-91

The bill would create a new public act to establish the Michigan Commission on Death and Dying within the Legislative Council, which would develop recommendations on legislation concerning "voluntary self-termination of life." In developing the recommendations, which would have to be submitted to the legislature within two years after the bill took effect, the commission would have to consider numerous matters prescribed in detail by the bill.

Commission work. Details to be considered by the commission would include the causes of suicide, other states' laws and their effect, societal attitudes toward suicide, whether to differentiate between terminal and non-terminal conditions, how the law should treat someone who assists in a suicide, and the relevance of constitutional and common-law rights. In general, the commission would have to consider current data concerning voluntary self-termination, the proper aims of legislation affecting voluntary self-termination, and the most efficient method of preventing self-termination, to the extent prevention is a proper aim of legislation. The commission also would have to consider appropriate guidelines and safeguards regarding voluntary self-termination the law should allow, including the advisability of allowing, in limited cases, administration of medication "in furtherance of a process of voluntary self-termination."

In its deliberations, the commission would have to invite substantial involvement from the academic, health care, legal, and religious communities, as well as from the general public. Commission business would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Commission membership. Each of the following groups could appoint two members to the commission: the American Association of Retired Persons; the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan; Citizens for Better Care; Health Care Association of Michigan; Hemlock of Michigan; Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens; Michigan Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons; Michigan Association of Suicidology; Michigan Council on Independent Living; Michigan Head Injury Survivor's Council; Michigan Hospice Organization; Michigan Hospital Association; Michigan Nonprofit Homes Association; Michigan Nurses Association; Michigan Psychiatric Society; Michigan Psychological Association; Michigan Senior Advocates Council; Michigan State Medical Society; National Association of Social Workers, Michigan Division; Right to Life of Michigan, Inc.; and the State Bar of Michigan. The commission would convene its first meeting within 90 days after the bill took effect; it would elect a member as chairperson at that meeting.

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Legislative finding. The bill would express a legislative finding that the voluntary self-termination of human life, with or without assistance, raises serious ethical and public health questions, and that the Michigan Commission on Death and Dying is to be created to study this problem and develop recommendations for the legislature.