

**TESTIMONY REGARDING HB 675 (Beard) and SB 40 (Cain)**  
**To create the Human Dignity Act**  
**(which places restrictions on death by starvation and dehydration)**  
**HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE**  
**May 16, 2005**

Good morning, Madame Chairman and Members of the Committee!

My name is Dr. W. "Al" Krotoski; I am a Baton Rouge physician, now retired. I represent *The Hippocratic Resource*, a Louisiana-wide organization of health care professionals, currently numbering 139, and including primarily physicians. I would like to address this Committee on Representative Beard's HB 675, the "Human Dignity Act" – as also Senator Cain's SB 40 – regarding death following discontinuation of hydration and nutrition.

1. Removal of hydration and nutrition, except *in extremis*, would be the direct cause of a patient's death by starvation and fluid deprivation. The death certificate would ethically require a pathologist to so state.

2. Contrary to statements in the media during the Terri Schiavo tragedy, death by starvation – and, particularly, by water deprivation – is a very painful and cruel way to die. This is witnessed by the measures to which people will go to obtain food and/or water, e.g. cannibalism, drinking of sea water, urine, and so forth.

3. Even the Nazis would stop the starvation process in their starvation bunkers – which were used for punishment of prisoners in concentration camps – by intravenously injecting such poisons as carbolic acid, etc., at 8 days. Terri Schiavo took over 13 days to die.

4. Withholding of water and nutrition precludes the possibility of healing or recovery; it is hurtful and cruel, and contrary to human dignity.

5. Therefore, water and nutrition must be regarded as a fundamental right for all human beings. We would not starve a prisoner to death, and a patient – a sick human being – is no less than a prisoner of his or her illness, and one who also must not be starved to death.

Thank you! I will be pleased to answer any questions.

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