

Save the pain
and respect life

New Jersey legislators who support passage of the Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Act (A2270/S382) should not be promoting doctor-assisted suicide as an acceptable solution for those diagnosed with terminal illness (Capital Talk by George Amick, "Freedom of choice and control of one's body," 6/19/14). The focus should be on providing medicines that help to alleviate pain and suffering.

Fortunately, at the June 5 Assembly Health and Senior Services committee hearing, expert testimony was provided to assure the committee members that patients suffering from severe pain can be administered palliative care that focuses on managing their symptoms, such as reducing their pain and anxiety. It is morally wrong and barbaric to use "suffering" as an excuse to deny the "sufferers" the legal right to obtain a lethal prescription from their physician for the purpose of self-administering and thus "killing" themselves.

The goal should be to prevent the patient's pain and prolong his or her life. "Killing" is never a loving solution, and I would urge our state legislators to vote "NO" on this proposed legislation.

Jill A. White,
Hamilton

Exempt teachers from
residency requirement

I read this quote in the article "Legislators reconsider N.J. teacher residency requirement" (June 18): "But there was a consequence Chris and the law's sponsors didn't see coming, according to lawmakers. It became a barrier for New Jersey school districts to attract young prospective teachers, administrators and even potential superintendents who live in nearby states."

How is it possible that legislators did not see this coming? When the residency legislation was under consideration, The Times published an editorial in favor of this stupid hiring restriction ("N.J. residency requirements for public workers makes sense for taxpayers," May 23, 2011).

At the time, I was the director of human resources for a local school district. I wrote a letter to the editor saying specifically that the legislation would narrow the choices of school districts when it came to hiring the best possible candidates for teaching positions. I am currently HR director in the state

could have told the Legislature the same thing.

I also sent a letter to the Legislature requesting that the legislation not be passed.

This measure is just one of the many ways the Christie administration has damaged the educational prospects of New Jersey children. The Times' support of the legislation was ill-considered.

An editorial indicating a change of heart and support for the new legislation, S2169, would be appreciated.

Russ Walsh,
Morrisville, Pa.

Arbitration cap measure
well on its way

The New Jersey General Assembly provided a good example of how government is supposed to work last Monday, when both sides came together and approved legislation that restores a 2 percent cap on the amount arbitrators can award police and firefighters when contract negotiations stall.

The original law, enacted in 2011, expired April 1.

There is no question that the arbitration cap, in conjunction with the property tax cap, has been successful in helping keep property tax levies down.

According to the Public Employment Relations Commission, the average raise awarded by arbitrators after the cap was in place dropped to 1.6 percent in 2013 from 3.8 percent in 2009.

At the same time, the average property tax increase last year was 1.7 percent.

In 2012, it was 1.6 percent, down from 2.4 percent in 2011, a sharp contrast with 2004 through 2006, when rates increased at least 7 percent each year.

Thanks to the diligent efforts of the governor and Assembly speaker, a compromise was reached that will restore the arbitration cap. It is fair to all parties involved and is as generous as we can be with our police officers and firefighters while still guarding the taxpayers' best interests.

I am grateful that common sense prevailed and we were able to see past political lines and pass a bill that implements a beneficial and essential law.

Declan O'Scanlon,
Red Bank

The writer is a prime sponsor of both the original arbitration cap law and A3424, the measure approved last Monday. It now heads to the Senate for consideration. He is Assembly Republican budget officer and represents the 13th District.

N.J. alimony reform
must be fair to both sides

Alimony is often one of the most important and most contested issues in a divorce case. My practice requires me to represent men and women, alimony payers and alimony recipients. Consequently, I have analyzed the New Jersey alimony statute and the current case law from both sides of the equation.

The current statute works well when properly argued by counsel and analyzed by the judges. That being said, I also recognize that the law can be improved. One area of potential improvement can be when the paying spouse retires in good faith and therefore experiences a reduction in his or her income.

Admittedly, the current law provides conflicting guidance on this topic.

The Family Law Executive Committee of the New Jersey State Bar Association, of which I am a member, has been committed to achieving equitable and well-reasoned reforms to the body of New Jersey alimony law. We have worked with the Legislature and have met with members of the New Jersey alimony reform movement. We have advocated for changes that are fair to both parties and which are not motivated by personal agendas.

There can be no doubt that the "reforms" advocated by groups such as New Jersey Alimony Reform serve to benefit no other than the payer of spousal support (letter, "Alimony reform bill should be approved," June 8).

The laws of the state of New Jersey must remain neutral and must be applied considering the specific facts and circumstances of each case. No two families in New Jersey are alike. Therefore, no two divorces are alike. We should not adopt a cookie-cutter approach that ignores the unique differences of each family coming before the family court.

T. Sandberg Durst, Esq.,
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The writer is attorney/owner of The Durst Firm LLC.

Some are amazed
by Cantor defeat

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's defeat rested on the issue of immigration, which a large number of the American people now oppose ("With Cantor's defeat, ambition runs high in House GOP," June 12).

What's amazing is that Rep. Cantor spent nearly \$5 million in his campaign, while winner David Brat spent only \$200,000.

Chip R. Baldwin,
Pennington

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