

# Agudath Israel Testifies Against New Jersey Assisted Suicide Bill

As some members of the New Jersey legislature work to make the Garden State the sixth state to allow physician assisted suicide for terminally ill patients, Agudath Israel of America is at the forefront in aggressively fighting that move.

On Thursday afternoon, Agudath Israel of America's New Jersey director, Rabbi Avi Schnall, expressed the organization's opposition of the proposed law to the Assembly Appropriations Committee members. Rabbi Schnall told the committee why this issue is particularly important: "Informed by classical Jewish tradition which teaches that all human life is sacred, and possessed of the firm view that laws that undermine the sanctity of human life send a message that is profoundly dangerous for all of society, Agudath Israel's interest in the issue of legalizing suicide is especially keen."

In addition to articulating the religious-moral opposition to physician assisted suicide, Agudath Israel's testimony laid out a clear legal case for the government to ban the practice, and noted that even some that are supportive of the bill from the medical community oppose the idea of allowing physicians to participate in the patients' decision to end their life.

Agudath Israel is also engaged in an aggressive lobbying campaign targeting individual state legislators to encourage them to vote against the bill.

Rabbi Schnall says that, per the directive of the organization's Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of America (Counsel of Torah Sages), the law presents a threat beyond its immediate repercussions. "If it becomes law, the assisted suicide bill can directly imperil even Orthodox Jews who would not

willingly choose death, Heaven forbid,” says Rabbi Schnall. “There is a very real concern of a slippery slope, where doctors, hospitals and insurers can pressure patients diagnosed with a terminal illness, people suffering from mental illness or individuals with disabilities to make the wrong choice.”

To read Rabbi Schnall’s testimony click [here](#).