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MEMORANDUM

TO: JACK QUINN
CAROL RASCO
TREY SCHROEDER

FROM: JOHN HART

DATE: MARCH 7, 1996

CC\ : MIKE MCCURRY

RE: Physician Assisted Suicide

In light of yesterday's 9th Circuit Court decision regarding physician assisted suicide, I thought it important for everyone to be aware of the President's position on the issue. As you well know, it was the first time that a full federal appeals court has ruled on the issue.

The President has been very clear that he opposes physician assisted suicide and would veto legislation to legalize it.

Attached is a compilation of statements that the President made as a candidate during 1992. To my knowledge, the President has not spoken to this issue during his time in office.

President Clinton -- Campaign Statements on Assisted Suicide

PORTLAND OREGONIAN (July 27, 1992)

Title: "CLINTON URGES BREAK WITH PAST"

[On a Seattle talk show, candidate Clinton was urged by Ronald Adkins, husband of Jack Kevorkian's first "assisted suicide" client, to support this agenda.]

Verbatim excerpt from article:

"I don't know that I agree with you," Clinton said, hesitating a bit and adding that he'd had an aunt and uncle who both had Alzheimer's. "It's a very tough question," Clinton said. "I think that under certain circumstances, taking people off life supports when they're totally unconscious and they only have 48 hours of breathing left may be different than helping people commit suicide when they're fully aware and conscious. I don't think I support that."

DETROIT FREE PRESS (September 23, 1992)

Title: "CLINTON BASHES NO-SHOW BUSH; ON TV LATER, HE CALLS ASSISTED SUICIDE WRONG"

Verbatim excerpt from article regarding a "town meeting" in Detroit:

In one answer, he declared his opposition to physician-assisted suicide, an issue which has put a ghoulisn national spotlight on Michigan because of the deaths of four people and a debate over sanctioning it into law.

"I respect the agony of the people that have gone through this, their families," Clinton said. "I've had many members of my family die after protracted and painful illnesses. . . . But I certainly would do what I could to oppose it. I think it's wrong."

ASSOCIATED PRESS (September 23, 1992)

[Reporting on same televised town meeting in Detroit as above story]

Verbatim excerpt from wire service story:

Clinton said he was opposed to physician-assisted suicide and would veto legislation to legalize it.

CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE (October 21, 1992)

Excerpt from CNS presidential candidate survey:

Question: Do you support legislation allowing a lethal injection or drug overdose to be administered by a physician for patients diagnosed as terminally ill?

Clinton: Oppose. I do not support doctor-assisted suicide.