

Hearing supports assisted suicide

By Tim Richard
staff writer

State Rep. Ted Wallace picked up support for an even stronger version of his bill to permit doctor-assisted suicide.

In an Oak Park public hearing Friday, some people even asked him to remove long waiting periods and restrictions on assisted suicide.

"I congratulate you on your alternative bill — putting the brakes on a knee-jerk reaction in the Legislature," said Daniel Devine Jr., Bloomfield Hills attorney representing the Hemlock Society of Michigan. "Why not deal with it (terminal illness and unbearable pain) directly — allow one to choose death tomorrow instead of six months from now?"

"This decision to seek aid in ending life must be reserved to the individual," agreed Madelyn Farris, a Southfield resident who told of caring for terminally ill family members. Opposing a provision in the bill restricting it to those of sound mind, Farris said, "Even dementia patients have periods of awareness."

BUT OTHERS said allowing suicide will lessen respect for human life. They called for a law to make assisting a suicide a four-year felony.

"Once assisted suicide is legal, involuntary suicide (euthanasia) becomes common practice. Once the door is open, there's no way of stopping it," said Detroit attorney Joseph Zanglin, representing Right to Life.

A House Judiciary subcommittee headed by Rep. Lynn Jondahl, D-Okemos, went through the lunch hour listening to testimony on rival bills. One would prohibit assisted suicide (SB 32, sponsored by Sen. Fred

Dillingham, R-Fowlerville); another would allow it (HB 5415, sponsored by Wallace, D-Detroit).

The chief critic of Wallace's bill was not that he would allow assisted suicide but that it was "too restrictive," in the words of Southfield attorney Barbara Cash. "When you speak of 'unbearable pain' and tell a patient to wait two months, I have a problem," Cash added.

TERESA HOBBS, a Lansing woman who said she has terminal cancer, called Wallace's bill "good because it gives people options." "But where you say two persons — a physician and a psychologist or psychiatrist — must sign your directive within seven days — that's nearly impossible and unrealistic. Unless it's an emergency, it's going to be six to eight weeks to get an appointment," Hobbs said.

"If (the bill) says you're not supposed to be depressed (when asking for assisted suicide), Hobbs said, "Anyone standing in front of a doctor who tells them they're terminally ill is going to be depressed."

"If a person is in unbearable pain, two months (of legal procedure) is a lifetime. It's easier to go out and walk in front of a truck. Stop making people jump through hoops," said Hobbs to great audience applause.

THE STATE SENATE passed SB 32 last week, but until last month it wasn't taken up in the House Judiciary Committee.

Dr. Jack Kevorkian, the Royal Oak pathologist who has assisted several suicides, is awaiting trial in Oakland Circuit Court on an open murder charge because Michigan has no law clearly prohibiting or allowing assisted suicide.

New OU president has plans to get to know her neighbors

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

The new president of Oakland University plans to get around.

Sandra Packard said she intends to get involved in neighboring communities to gather support for OU as well as offer academic assistance whenever possible.

"We're educators first, she said. But an institution like OU should have a good 'town and gown' relationship with its neighbors.

Packard is no stranger to the Detroit area, although she has never lived in Michigan and presently resides in Tennessee.

"My husband and I used to come to Mt. Clemens for sailing," and we've enjoyed other amenities like the Detroit art museum. Sandra Packard told an admiring audience Wednesday when she was formally introduced as the new president at OU.

Packard has degrees from Syracuse and Indiana and is currently the provost at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the top academic post at the 8,000-student school.

She was selected from four final candidates culled from 121 applicants.

At what amounted to a coming out party Wednesday, Packard said she gladly accepts the new position, although her salary (expected to be about \$100,000, or about \$20,000 more than her current salary) and details of her new contract are yet to be ratified by the OU board at its April 8 meeting.

SHE REPLACES Joseph E. Champagne who was president for a decade. Champagne's salary was \$120,000 annually.

She plans to live in Sunset Ter-



New OU president Sandra Packard plans to be accessible to students and faculty who simply want to 'stop and chat' about their concerns.

race, the traditional president's residence on campus, and assume her new duties about June 15.

Packard said she has a cooperative management style and pledged to quickly immerse herself at OU to more quickly learn the needs of the students, faculty and community.

She plans to be accessible to students and faculty who simply want to

"stop and chat" about their concerns.

Asked about her lack of a scientific background — one of her few shortcomings mentioned during the interview process — Packard said nobody can be an expert in every field. She pledged to quickly meet with the staff and faculty within the science departments to learn about

their needs and objectives. "Together we can move forward," she said. Packard has been at UT since 1985. Prior to that she was dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions at Bowling Green State University.

It was there, primarily, that she and her husband, a clinical psychologist, got acquainted with the Detroit area and other parts of Michigan.

USUALLY ACCOMPANIED by their three daughters, the Packard family did a lot of sailing, mostly in Lake Erie, but frequently in Lake Michigan and Lake St. Clair.

She was also familiar with OU, something she said made the prospect of being president extremely attractive.

"I knew that Oakland University had an excellent reputation," she said. "I also heard a lot of favorable things about the school from my boss, Chancellor Frederick Obeor."

Obeor was a provost at OU before moving to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

OU repeats workshop for job hunters

So many people wanted to register for the Successful Job Hunt Strategies workshop, that the Oakland University Continuum Center has scheduled another.

It will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 28 on the Rochester campus.

The reduced fee of \$19 for a seminar which normally costs \$55 will apply. The special offer was in response to the recent job-loss crunch brought on by industry cut-backs, downsizings and take-overs.

The workshop is open to anyone who may need to look for a new job now, or in the future, regardless of educational background.

Participants will learn four vital components to conducting a successful job search:

- How to find employers in a tight job market.
- Ways to consider a full range of career options.
- How to write a resume for today's competitive climate.
- Interviewing know-how to make top impressions.

Pre-registration with payment of the \$19 fee is required. MasterCard/Visa are accepted. An optional workbook will be offered at a discount price of \$5. Call 376-5033 before March 26 to reserve a spot.

The Continuum Center is part of the Oakland University School of Education and Human Services and specializes in programs of professional development and personal enrichment.

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