

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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Agoura, California

The Joni and Friends International Disability Center

Contact: Steve Appel, Communications Director – 818/707-5664

### **Joni Tada and Disability Advocates Scorn New Euthanasia Bill**

*February 15, Agoura, California:*

Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic for nearly 40 years, has voiced strong opposition to new efforts in the California state assembly to legalize euthanasia. Today, two state lawmakers reintroduced a bill which would make physician-assisted suicide legal in California.

Mrs. Tada, active in disability advocacy for over 25 years, stated, “Californians have consistently voted down physician-assisted suicide measures. I’m convinced the people of this state recognize the great danger legalized euthanasia would pose to people with disabilities. Rather than make it easier for people to die, we believe it should be the responsibility of our legislators to make it easier for people to live by providing funding for pain management education, the hospice movement, and better palliative care.”

People in the disability community, along with the California Medical Association, hospice organizations, and the Alliance of Catholic Health Care believe that physician-assisted suicide is bad public policy for millions of people living with disabilities and chronic disease who are without insurance, or who are elderly. Mrs. Tada states, “The potential for abuse to people with disabilities *far outweighs* the small ‘benefit’ provided to relatively few people. It’s disheartening that the California state assembly is more focused on helping people die, rather than helping people with disabilities and the elderly live better quality lives.”

The state of Hawaii recently voted down a similar physician-assisted suicide measure. In 1992 and in 2005, California also failed to pass the same euthanasia measures.

Joni Eareckson Tada founded the JAF International Disability Center in Agoura, California in 1979. She and President, Doug Mazza, lead a staff of over 100 disability ministry leaders who serve thousands of families affected by disability in California and across the nation.