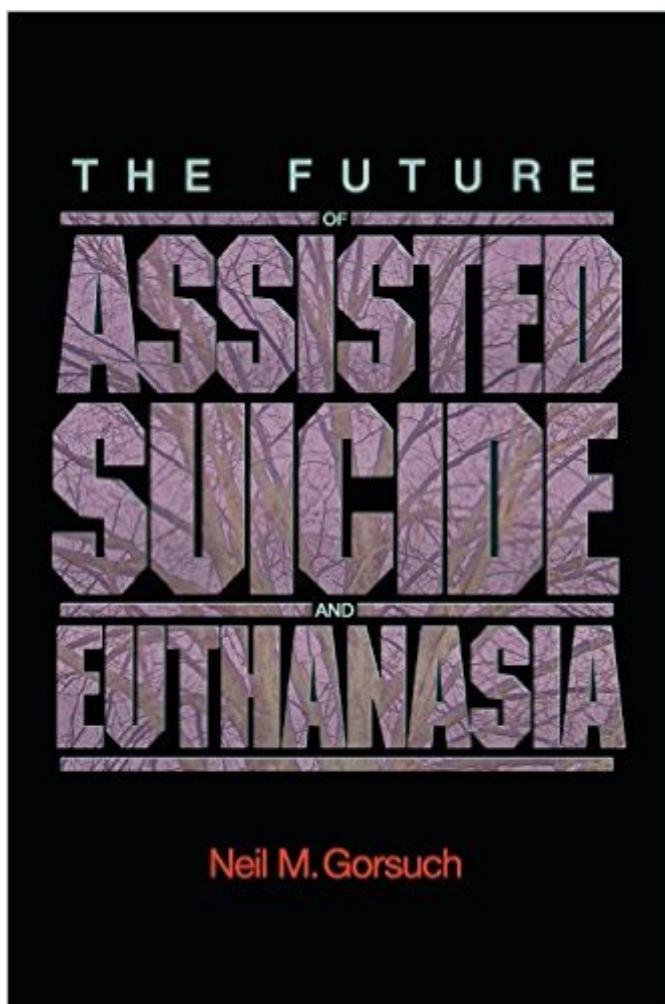


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# The Future Of Assisted Suicide And Euthanasia (New Forum Books)



## Synopsis

The Future of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia provides the most thorough overview of the ethical and legal issues raised by assisted suicide and euthanasia--as well as the most comprehensive argument against their legalization--ever published. In clear terms accessible to the general reader, Neil Gorsuch thoroughly assesses the strengths and weaknesses of leading contemporary ethical arguments for assisted suicide and euthanasia. He explores evidence and case histories from the Netherlands and Oregon, where the practices have been legalized. He analyzes libertarian and autonomy-based arguments for legalization as well as the impact of key U.S. Supreme Court decisions on the debate. And he examines the history and evolution of laws and attitudes regarding assisted suicide and euthanasia in American society. After assessing the strengths and weaknesses of arguments for assisted suicide and euthanasia, Gorsuch builds a nuanced, novel, and powerful moral and legal argument against legalization, one based on a principle that, surprisingly, has largely been overlooked in the debate--the idea that human life is intrinsically valuable and that intentional killing is always wrong. At the same time, the argument Gorsuch develops leaves wide latitude for individual patient autonomy and the refusal of unwanted medical treatment and life-sustaining care, permitting intervention only in cases where an intention to kill is present. Those on both sides of the assisted suicide question will find Gorsuch's analysis to be a thoughtful and stimulating contribution to the debate about one of the most controversial public policy issues of our day.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I believe that anyone who is concerned about the issue must engage with [Gorsuch's] arguments."--Raymond Tallis, *Times Literary Supplement*"Gorsuch lucidly lays out the key ethical and philosophical arguments on both sides. . . . [This] is the most important book published so far in consideration of ethical and legal issues."--Kevin Yuill, *Spiked Review of Books*"The author provides a thorough overview of the ethical and legal issues raised by assisted suicide and euthanasia, as well as the most comprehensive argument against their legalization."--*Issues in Law & Medicine*"Gorsuch reviews the case law and the range of ethical and legal issues surrounding assisted suicide and offers a strong argument against legalization of these practices, even as he considers both positions in the debate."--*Law & Social Inquiry*"For those who need insight into the part played by legislators and courts of justice in recent euthanasia discussions, Neil M. Gorsuch's book . . . is an excellent source. . . . [C]omprehensive and well argued."--Theo A. Boer, *Journal of Religious Ethics*"Neil M. Gorsuch builds a powerful moral and legal argument against [assisted suicide's] legalization, one based on a principle that has largely been overlooked in the debate--the idea that human life is intrinsically valuable and that intentional killing is wrong."--*New Oxford Review*"Thoroughly researched. . . . Gorsuch is especially successful when exploring the relevant legal cases raised by assisted-suicide and euthanasia advocacy."--Wesley J. Smith, *First Things*"Goruch's book is an exceptional contribution to a debate that is both significant and topical. Every reader, whether or not ultimately persuaded by his arguments, will emerge better equipped to tackle the profound questions surrounding euthanasia and assisted suicide. It is essential reading for advocates and opponents alike."--Wendy E. Hiscox, *Studies in Christian Ethics*

"A thoughtful, sober, and thorough work, which should be read by supporters, opponents, and the undecided alike."--Eugene Volokh, *UCLA School of Law*"This may well become one of the most important books in the field. It is timely, thorough, well reasoned, well structured, and well written. Its reply to the arguments for legalizing physician-assisted suicide is measured, fair, and persuasive."--John Keown, *Georgetown University, author of Euthanasia, Ethics, and Public Policy*"Gorsuch's book is an exceptionally fine contribution to one of the most timely debates in ethics and public policy: the question of assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia. It sorts out the arguments for and against relaxing legal prohibitions on choices of these kinds, and does so in tandem with an account--close, accurate, straightforward, and uncluttered--of the developing law in statutes and cases. It could quickly become the leading book in the field."--Robert P. George, *Princeton University, and the President's Commission on Bioethics*"In a world where there are now

many books and articles on assisted suicide and euthanasia, Neil Gorsuch's book is a timely and significant contribution. While the primary focus is on the law, with a systematic survey of pertinent legal and court decisions, the book manages as well to nicely set the problem within a broader international context. His insights and arguments are penetrating and pertinent, and anyone who reads this book will come away with an expanded horizon of understanding."--Daniel Callahan, The Hastings Center, author of *The Research Imperative: What Price Better Health?* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Good read

I liked it better when I read this material the first time in the 1984 article in the Indiana Law Journal, and an academic article published in 2000.

This review has no spoilers as to the author's conclusion. This book shows how a good legal mind prepares. It surveys the examples, reasons, and consequences of assisted suicide and euthanasia. The survey is across 2,000 years and places around the world. There are also chapters for the positions of selected ethical systems. The book is a display of legal scholarship seeking perspectives to prepare to form an opinion. We see classical Greece, Rome, Britain, Netherlands, and some states and historical episodes in the USA in detail. There are some key legal cases in the USA and Europe. These sources appear to match the education of the author. There is nothing from the Middle East, South or East Asia, Africa, or Native American cultures which might be influential on tens of millions of current US citizens. The book does not discuss how pertinent examples might be. For example, no Roman person ever had an opinion about removing a feeding tube or separating conjoined twins. The slave society of Sparta would not have any thoughts about universal individual rights. Nor are they valid examples of what we risk becoming. We will not adopt infanticide for cosmetic defects as part of our consideration of euthanasia just as surely as a Spartan never let a woman vote. They were our past not our future and the book has "future" in its title. The founding event of our country was an unprecedented liberation of the citizen, and we have evolved our society with multiple emancipations since then. Each one frees us more completely as individuals and expands the horizons of human potential. The founders understood the declaration of rights should not be a limit upon the people, but upon the government. Past times and other places with unrealized freedoms are at best qualified guides to modern ethics. To the extent that the book catalogs as data

the consequences of assisted suicide and euthanasia policy from other times and places I applaud it. But other times and peoples are no substitute for contemporary, actual citizens. The book is not adept with numbers. They are generally presented without context to understand if they are large or small. Numbers are stated in isolation and little curiosity is applied to teasing out insights from them. The author supposes the lack of Blacks choosing assisted suicide in Oregon is evidence of it being a “cultural choice”. With less than 70 assisted suicides in any one year and 1 in 60 ratio of Blacks in Oregon, it is statistically very unlikely any Black person in Oregon wanting assistance would have had a Black physician to ask, one who would not see a professional risk in agreeing. The numbers reflect our society and its problems, not “Black culture”. The author should walk in the shoes of fellow contemporary citizens. Understanding them has priority over understanding ancient Romans or even modern Dutch. The book has a glaring gap in comparing to second amendment rights. Over half of USA suicides are with a gun, and a third of gun fatalities are suicides. These facts have not made those who sell or make guns culpable. The average gun dealer sells a gun used in a suicide every 5 years or almost certainly more often than a physician will ever be asked to assist suicide. They sell a gun which will be used for murder every 2.5 years. Legal arguments establish no responsibility to the sellers or makers of guns or why would similar arguments not be valid for those who assist suicide? Would an assistant who gives a gun, not pills, be protected from responsibility? The book considers neither the similarity nor the legal doctrines which flow around the second amendment. Early in the book “assisted suicide” is analyzed as a situation where the person assisting must have an intent that the other person will die. The author never seems to consider that assistant could be sincere in not wanting the person to die, but committed to supporting the individual right of choice. What happened to “I do not support what you do, but I support your right to do it”? The author never revisits this analysis, and it colors judgement throughout the book. Lurid hypothetical consequences are presented for the various social norms or philosophical approaches. Many of us would find these repugnant or but in this work of scholarship, mere “many of us” is not the expected standard. On what philosophy or culture, or even religion, were the good and the bad separated? On what grounds should we agree with the conclusions of the book? The foundations are unstated. The book is unpersuasive. It has too many gaps. The work needs to be expanded with a more representative sweep of sources, a stated ethical foundation, grounded in the real world of today’s citizens, not commingled with alien times and places.

Excellent review of both issues

Extremely well written. Nice summary of the history of assisted suicide. Raises some great issues. Not preachy.

Good read

My grandson is in college and he asked for this book. I always buy my grandchildren books.

According to Politico (4/05/17), by John Bresnahan and Burgess Everett there are allegations about citing errors and more.

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