
6/7/94 DAILY NEWS PUBLIC FORUM

Saunders' attack on assisted suicide 'raves on'

I continually vacillate between hoping the Daily News will stop printing Debra Saunders' venomous columns, and being grateful for her clear examples of spleen-driven intellectual dishonesty. Her latest diatribe opposing assisted suicide (Daily News Opinions, May 31) does not make her point even on its own terms, to say nothing of her unfair and distorted images of those who favor assisted suicide.

Most puzzling is her attack on "America's middle and upper classes" for promoting assisted suicide. First, it is just these classes that Saunders regularly lauds as America's bedrock — the average Jane and Joe working with their well-off and creative compatriots to recover America's greatness and competitive edge. Now, oddly, they are treated to the same viciousness that Saunders reserves for the liberals, against whom they have always defended America. Second, it is well-understood that the overwhelming majority of poor people are politically inactive because they feel powerless and uninformed. Thus Saunders stretches beyond reason in hinting that the poor are not lobbying for assisted suicide because they recognize a danger to their own existence in a "cost-conscious health-care era."

Waxing more wroth, Saunders then conjures up an all-pervasive decadence. We have gone soft because "other people" pick our fruit, collect our trash and provide a host of other goods and services for us (including washing machines). But this is simply the economy. To suggest that wedding caterers and appliance stores produced the assisted-suicide movement borders on dementia.

Those who cannot grant their opponents a measure of decency and humanity usually lack those qualities themselves, and Saunders' insistence on messy, violent and perhaps unsuccessful suicide betrays a cruel streak that belies her purported concern about the potential abuse of legal assisted suicide.

In fact, the assisted-suicide movement will succeed because the number of people who do not want to live beyond a capacity to enjoy life or to be a burden to their families, is growing rapidly. Rave on, Debra.

— **Bill Becker**
Woodland Hills

