

House Bill No. 35-E

An act relating to the authority for the Governor to issue a one-time stay; authorizing the Governor to issue a one-time stay to prevent the withholding of nutrition and hydration under certain circumstances; providing for expiration of the stay; authorizing the Governor to lift the stay at any time; providing that a person is not civilly liable and is not subject to regulatory or disciplinary sanctions for taking an action in compliance with any such stay; providing for the chief judge of the circuit court to appoint a guardian ad litem; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. (1) The Governor shall have the authority to issue a one-time stay to prevent the withholding of nutrition and hydration from a patient if, as of October 15, 2003:

(a) That patient has no written advance directive;

(b) The court has found that patient to be in a persistent vegetative state;

(c) That patient has had nutrition and hydration withheld; and

(d) A member of that patient's family has challenged the withholding of nutrition and hydration.

(2) The Governor's authority to issue the stay expires 15 days after the effective date of this act, and the expiration of that authority does not impact the validity or the effect of any stay issued pursuant to this act. The Governor may lift the stay authorized under this act at any time. A person may not be held civilly liable and is not subject to regulatory or disciplinary sanctions for taking any action to comply with a stay issued by the Governor pursuant to this act.

(3) Upon the issuance of a stay, the chief judge of the circuit court shall appoint a guardian ad litem for the patient to make recommendations to the Governor and the court.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor October 21, 2003.

Filed in Office Secretary of State October 21, 2003.