**The Dying Cancer Patient**

Wilfred, age 75, has been suffering from cancer for 10 years. The pain associated with the cancer is severe and has become worse over time. Wilfred’s doctors say there is no treatment to either slow down the cancer’s growth or substantially reduce the pain. Wilfred asks Martha, his wife of 50 years, to relieve him of the terrible pain. He asks her to bring him a bottle of pills that would help him end his own life. Martha, who cannot stand watching Wilfred suffer anymore, gives him the pills. He swallows them all, slowly fades off to sleep, and dies.

**Questions:**

1. Was Wilfred’s request related to suicide? Explain.
2. If you were the district attorney in the state where Martha lives, would you file criminal charges against her? Explain.
3. If manslaughter charges were filed and you were on the jury, would you vote to convict Martha? Give your reasons. If Martha were convicted, what sentence should she receive? Why?
4. If the bottle of pills had been given to Wilfred by a physician instead of by his wife, would your answers have been different? Give your reasons.
5. If you were a state legislator, would you advocate a law allowing assisted suicide? Explain.

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