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March 20, 2013  
Personal Testimony  
Public Health Committee Hearing  
Physician Assisted Suicide HB 6645  
Legislative Office Building, Rm 1D  
Hartford, CT

Dear Public Health Committee,

I respectfully and sincerely appreciate your dedicated service to our state and country. I initially trained as a registered nurse, but felt that I could do more as a physician, so I went to medical school. I am now a physician, trained to provide compassionate care, listen to my patient's needs, and do my best to promote their well-being. As a pediatrician, what my patients want is not always in their best interest. Often parents have found alternative treatments online, or teenagers have diagnosed themselves and have decided what treatment they need--with my signature of approval. The state has entrusted me with a medical license to use my judgement and education to provide care that will benefit my patients. I do not take this responsibility lightly.

The Hippocratic Oath is commonly quoted by physicians to refute Physician Assisted Suicide. I would like to quote another Oath which speaks to support the profession of medicine, a vow I took as a graduating osteopathic physician. Taken from *The Osteopathic Oath*, by Andrew Taylor Still:

"I do hereby affirm my loyalty to the profession I am about to enter. I will be mindful always of my great responsibility to preserve the health and the life of my patients, to retain their confidence and respect both as a physician and a friend who will guard their secrets with scrupulous honor and fidelity, to perform faithfully my professional duties, to employ only those recognized methods of treatment consistent **with good judgment and with my skill and ability, keeping in mind always nature's laws and the body's inherent capacity for recovery.**

I will be ever vigilant in aiding in the general welfare of the community, sustaining its laws and institutions, not engaging in those practices which will in any way bring shame or discredit upon myself or my profession. **I will give no drugs for deadly purposes to any person, though it be asked of me...**"

As a physician, this bill provides a slippery slope for the patient-physician relationship, one that should be built on trust and compassion. Patients come to me for my best medical advice and direction. I am obligated--through moral and legal requirements--to provide my best advice. I am not trained, paid, or licensed to give patients what they want because they believe it is in their best interest. I will do (and have done) everything available to ease suffering of terminally ill patients. I have participated in withdrawal of support conversations with families. I do not believe a patient diagnosed with a terminal illness, their family, or their physician and health care team can conceivably predict one's expected level of suffering as their illness progresses.

For these reasons, as a resident of the state of Connecticut, and as your constituent, I plead you to act now to stop this bill in this committee meeting today.

Sincerely,

Sarah M. Coors, BSN, DO