

Connecticut General Assembly  
Public Health Committee Public Hearing  
HB 6645  
March 20, 2013

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am Father Ted Tumicki. I am a moral theologian, canon lawyer, and the pastor of three Catholic parishes in Griswold, Preston, and Voluntown, and I presently live in the borough of Jewett City.

I am speaking against House Bill 6645, the so-called *Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients*. I say "so-called" because what is being described in the bill, namely the taking of one's own life with the assistance of at least one other person, is assisted suicide. Why the bill is not accurate and truthful in terminology is a good question. Is it because "compassionate aid in dying" sounds better than "physician assisted suicide" and stands a better chance of being passed into law? If physician assisted suicide is so good for society, as proponents advocate, then why not be honest in the terminology? Why are you not being honest with us and telling us the truth?

Another problem is that there is no timeline for when the qualified patient is supposed to ingest the medication. The patient simply receives the lethal medication and then nothing may happen... but what happens if the patient dies before taking the medication and a young grandchild or nephew or niece finds the medication and ingests it? Who is going to ensure that such a young child is informed of how to dispose of such medication in accordance with the law? And how is such informing supposed to happen if the patient chose not to tell anyone that he or she was going to commit suicide and the existing medication is unknown or its discovery comes as a complete surprise?

What happens if the qualified patient takes the medication and it does not work as he or she intends it to: Can the patient sue for malpractice? Can the patient sue their doctor for wrongful life or wrongful living? Will the legal landscape now include lawsuits for both wrongful death and wrongful life? How is that upholding public health?

One very disturbing aspect of this bill is the prescribed manner in which qualified patients must die in order to enjoy the safety of the proposed law. I had an uncle who was diagnosed with cancer. He said when it got to a terminal stage, he would simply put a bullet through his head. He said it very rationally and he was legally competent to make decisions. If he carried out his plan under this proposed law, his process would be illegal. If he wanted to commit suicide legally, he would have had to follow the process of death-by-suicide described - and PREscribed- in your proposed legislation. Is it the role of the Public Health Committee to dictate how a person must die to enjoy the favor of the law? Are you comfortable in your role as legislators dictating to suicide-seeking, law-abiding citizens the manner in which they must commit suicide in order to enjoy your favor of granting lawfulness? Is it the role of government to hasten the death and demise of its law-abiding citizens?

I answer, "No." I hope you answer the same. Please vote against this bill.