

THE STEWART B. MCKINNEY FOUNDATION

**1216 Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824**

Re: HB 6645, "An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill"

Madame Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Lucie McKinney, and as the Founder and Chairman of the Stewart B. McKinney Foundation that is dedicated to providing funds to care for people with HIV/AIDS who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, I want to express my absolute support for HB 6645.

My support for "Compassionate Aid in Dying" dates back to when I watched Stewart die a long, slow, agonizing death from HIV/AIDS in 1986. I prayed that God would take him quickly so he could finally be at peace. Although I appreciate and value the benefits that Hospice organizations bestow upon the terminally ill, there are many who do not want to die loaded with painkillers that dull the pain but also make them incoherent, while, unintentionally, delaying and prolonging the inevitable.

When I founded the Stewart B. McKinney Foundation in 1987, about a year after Stewart's death, we still had no treatments available to treat people with HIV. So from 1987 until the late 1990's, approximately 10-12 years, I watched countless numbers of McKinney Houses' AIDS patients succumb to the disease, many of them asking for and wishing they could just take a bottle or two of pills to rapidly end their suffering. Is it too much to ask for one to have the right to choose prescription medications as their option to a dignified and compassionate end, especially when they are terminally ill and the end is rapidly approaching? I am extremely sympathetic with those infected with HIV/AIDS and have devoted the last 26 years of my life trying to make their lives a little bit more comfortable and secure.

My wish is, and I believe Stewart's wish would have been, to see this bill passed to provide an "aid in dying" option, not only to mentally competent, terminally ill HIV/AIDS patients, but also to any and all human beings who, regardless of age or other factors, face a prolonged, possibly agonizing death from a terminal illness, such as incurable cancer. If only you could place yourselves in the shoes of one those dying patients for just a few hours, your vote on HB 6645 would be made easy. Dying with the aid of prescription medications should be a dying patients' right.



Lucie McKinney
Chairwoman, The Stewart B. McKinney Foundation