



State of Connecticut
SENATE

SENATOR MICHAEL A. McLACHLAN
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DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER

March 20, 2013

RANKING MEMBER
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
GENERAL BONDING SUB COMMITTEE

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE, & BONDING COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan and I stand in firm opposition to **House Bill 6645, *An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients***.

I fear that with this legislation we are legitimizing suicide – a very dangerous precedent.

This legislation promotes the culture of assisted suicide in Connecticut, and tells citizens that suicide is an acceptable solution to life's hardships.

I am adamantly opposed to this legislation and any attempts by government to authorize any form of assisted suicide. Suicide is wrong, especially when it is assisted by loved ones or physicians. Humans are given the gift of life. People like me who hold strong convictions in their faith believe that it is not our duty, or within our ability, to control the beginning or end of our life. With this legislation, individuals will decide when their lives end. They will also be protected to have their loved ones assist in ending that life. As a faithful Catholic, I do not feel comfortable granting that authority to anyone. Life is the most basic gift of a loving God, to which humans have stewardship, not absolute dominion. No one, including the government, should ever intend to cause their own death or assist in the taking of another's.

I am very concerned about the negative impacts this legislation would have on some of society's most vulnerable populations - the elderly and the disabled. I am worried that this legislation will open the door for abuse of the elderly and disabled by allowing those around them to influence their decision to commit suicide for their own gain. This proposal has no safeguard for abuse, and there is a lack of appropriate monitoring of the mental capacity of those who will receive the lethal dose. Furthermore, there is no way of knowing when the lethal dose is administered or if it was done so voluntarily. With a lack of safeguards in place there is no way to know if suicide is what the person truly desired or if it is a priority of those around them.

In states where assisted suicide has been approved, suicide rates have increased. Thirteen years after assisted suicide passed in Oregon, the suicide rate was 41% higher than the national average.

I am concerned that the same will happen in Connecticut. The Legislature should not create the culture of death that will surely come with this proposal. As elected officials and public servants we should be fostering a culture that supports those who are fighting death, whether they are elderly or sick. We should encourage them to fight with strength of character and to live the life that they have been blessed to have fully, to the very last breath. We should not be encouraging them to give up and a way to tamper with their own fate.

I strongly urge this committee to oppose **House Bill 6645, *An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients***.