

Madame Chair and members of the committee:

My name is Amy Miller and I am a proud resident of Old Saybrook, CT. I am writing to you about House Bill 6645, An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill. I am testifying in support of the Bill.

Connecticut has a well-deserved reputation as a state that values the rights of its citizens in all stages of life; laws have been enacted from child protection to elder abuse. I view House Bill 6645 as one more important effort to ensure our rights.

I managed my mother's care during the last six months of her life in 2012. She lived in Massachusetts and voted by mail (as she was too ill to go to the polling place) in favor of their proposal for a Compassionate Aid in Dying Act. She died two weeks later. Although she had excellent care from hospice, a full time aid and family and friends, she suffered deeply in her loss of autonomy and dignity. She became more and more depressed because as she stated, "I've lost my identity." She went through the emotional stages of grief and accepted the reality of her imminent death. But she felt she had no quality of life left. She did not enjoy visits from friends the last two months or so. She couldn't read or listen to CD's. She was in bed all the time. She kept telling me she just wanted to die. I don't know if she would have decided to take a lethal dose of medication if it were legal, but I do know she would have liked to have had the option.

Illness deprives us of a sense of control in most aspects of daily life. It seems like plain common sense to provide some control over the inevitable end.

I have stage 4B endometrial cancer. I am currently in remission. I have seriously considered, if/when it comes back, moving to Oregon if CT has not passed this Bill. I want the choice. I know, if it comes to that, merely having a lethal dose of medication in a drawer nearby, would give me great comfort and relief, even if I decided against using it.

So please move forward with this important Bill. It is written with such care and insight as to prevent any misuse of its intent. Let's keep CT among the pioneers in ensuring the rights of American citizens.

Respectfully,
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