

Madam Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Adam Stillman from Old Saybrook, and I am here to lend my support for Bill # ~~6445~~ ⁶⁶⁴⁵, An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients. I urge you to support this legislation.

Our Declaration of Independence talks of “inalienable rights.” In particular I refer to; life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Although such topics may seem outside the scope for the debate and discussion of this bill, it is clearly on point. The importance of this legislation is choice. A patient’s freedom of choice to make (or not make,) the decision to terminate their own life goes directly to the freedoms and liberties our forefathers envisioned when crafting and signing that important document.

There are many reasons people ultimately take this “final option.” It may concern the loss of autonomy or the ability to engage with people. Excessive pain, the burdens placed on a victim’s family, or the economic stresses that terminal illnesses impose on patients and their families are all reasons people cite when discussing this position. In addition, you will hear testimony adopting different viewpoints, providing examples of personal experiences, and I expect the expression of religious values.

Regardless of the testimony itself, the breadth and diversity of the testimony is evidence why the bill should be ultimately signed into law. The one constant among the speakers is that each has an opinion that is personal to them. An opinion that is strong enough to bring them to Hartford and compel them to appear before this committee. Their choices, are based on their beliefs, their opinions and/or their experiences.

I am asking you to support and vote in favor of this bill because patients who will ultimately be affected by this bill have the right to make these decisions based on their beliefs, opinions and experiences. This bill places the option, the preference, the choices to make; in the hands of the patient. It does not force anyone to choose this option or even encourage advising them of the option.

This bill provides protections against abuse and encourages an informed review of choices, not concealed or inhibits discussion. It is neither designed for the infirm mind, nor permits the decision to be made without substantial consideration. There are extensive protections and safeties written into the legislation, as are penalties for those found to violate the provisions. The availability of options presented by this legislation may even be preferable to current standards, as it requires counseling and opportunities to rescind this ultimate decision..

Despite the strong opinions, compelling, touching personal experiences, the religious debate, and other evidence to be presented today, I believe it boils down to “pro-choice” vs. “no-choice.” As legislators, you work very hard to improve the lives of your constituents. There is nothing more evident of the freedom envisioned by our forefathers than the ability to choose your own destiny, free from the interference of others.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

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